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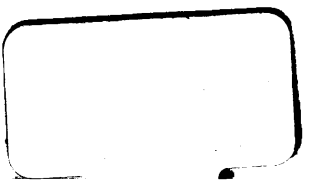

BWX
Baretti

AN ACCOUNT OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF ITALY;

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MISTAKES OF SOME TRAVELLERS,

WITH

REGARD TO THAT COUNTRY.

BY JOSEPH BARETTI.

VOL. II.

Il y a des Erreurs qu' il faut réfuter ſérieuſement; des Abſurdités dont il faut rire; et des Fauſſetés qu' il faut repouſſer avec force.

VOLTAIRE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. DAVIES, IN RUSSEL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN; AND L. DAVIS AND C. REYMERS IN HOLBORN.

MDCCLXVIII.

RECEIVED 1096 '00

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AN

ACCOUNT

OF

ITALY.

CHAP. XVIII.

MR. Sharp has ſaid, that *the Italians place all their young ladies in convents, and leave them there until they marry or take the veil*; and the ſame thing has been repeatedly aſſerted by ſeveral proteſtant travellers* long before Mr. Sharp thought of giving the world his itinerary letters.

But why do theſe folks take ſo much pains to circulate this falſhood in their

* See the firſt note to the preceding chapter.

reſpective countries? Is it ignorance, or is it malice? I will ſuppoſe that they mean nothing elſe, but to make their young country-women in love with their ſeveral reformations, which allow of no convents, and keep them as much as poſſible from taking the leaſt turn towards popery. But if this is their deſign, they muſt ſuffer themſelves to be put upon a level with our knaviſh or fooliſh friars, who tell us millions of lies of the heretics with the pious intention to make us adhere cloſer to our preſent mode of belief.

Whatever motive the proteſtant travel-writers may have for this diſingenuity, I muſt take the liberty to tell thoſe who believe them, that their aſſertions upon this head are falſe, and that that we have no ſuch general cuſtom: and indeed it would be impoſſible to have it, unleſs we were to build thouſands of new convents throughout our land, as thoſe we have at preſent are neither numerous nor large

large enough to contain the hundredth part of our young ladies.

Of this impoſſibility one may preſently be convinced, by caſting an eye on the authentic *Liſt of the inhabitants of Tuſcany* given us by Mr. Sharp. It appears by that liſt, that the number of the nuns throughout that ſtate amounts to little more than *nine thouſand*, and that the number of unmarried women and girls amounts to more than *three hundred and ten thouſand.*

Let us now ſuppoſe upon a very moderate calculation, that out of the three hundred and ten thouſand, only *thirty-ſix thouſand* are young girls who are able to pay for education. Upon this ſuppoſition our nunneries contain four penſioners for every nun, in conſequence of Mr. Sharp's aſſertion. Thus, for inſtance, a nunnery inhabited by *one hundred nuns*, contains beſide *four hundred young ladies* who are penſioners. But if Mr. Sharp had taken the trouble only to ſtep to ſome of our nun-

neries, and aſked after the numbers of their inhabitants, he would have found, that a nunnery which contains, for inſtance, one hundred nuns, far from containing four hundred young ladies, generally contains *not a ſingle one*, and very ſeldom more than *ſix or ſeven*. This diſcovery, which was not difficult to make, would probably have kept him from ſetting upon paper ſo palpable an untruth.

By this account, corroborated by Mr. Sharp's liſt, it plainly appears, that inſtead of having full *thirty-ſix thouſand* young ladies locked up in the nunneries of Tuſcany, we have ſcarcely *ſix hundred*, which bear but a very ſmall proportion to near *a million of people:* and it cannot be reaſonably ſuppoſed that the reſt of the Italians are upon a worſe footing than the Tuſcans in this particular. Yet the diſtance between truth and Mr. Sharp's aſſertion will prove ſtill greater, when we conſider that the inſtitutions of ſeveral amongſt our female religious orders forbid the

the nuns to receive young ladies as penſioners and boarders.

See now, my good readers, what dependance you muſt have on the veracity of your travel-writers, though their accounts be conſtantly uniform, and conſtantly delivered in the moſt petulant ſtrain of affirmation! They ſee nothing; examine nothing; but copy one another in a moſt ſhameleſs manner.

If the number of our young ladies placed in nunneries has been moſt impudently exaggerated by thoſe ingenuous gentlemen, the number of our nuns themſelves has likewiſe been by them enlarged to ſuch a degree, as to make every credulous reader ſhrink with horrour. And yet Mr. Sharp's liſt proves with unconteſtable evidence, that their proportion to the reſt of the community is no more than *one to a hundred.*

But ſtill this number of our nuns in proportion to the reſt of our community will be exclaimed againſt as too large, by

thoſe deep dealers in politics who ſwarm ſo much in this political iſland; and they will look down with a diſdainful eye upon the Italian legiſlatures, which deprive us of ſo many women, who, if made lawful mothers, might contribute their ſhare to the greater ſtrength and happineſs of the country.

But pray, my dear politicians, where is the country, whoſe women can all be made lawful mothers? Is it England? I am afraid not; ſince in England there are at leaſt five or ſix maidens in a hundred, who grow old in the utter impoſſibility of providing themſelves with huſbands; which I am ſure is not the caſe in Italy, where an old maiden in an object ſcarcely ever to be ſeen, thanks to our nunneries, which are the general receptacle of thoſe amongſt our girls, to whom fortune (permit me the uſe of this heathenish word) has denied either a portion, or a fine face, or both. Let any Engliſh traveller (who ſtays long enough in the country for

opportunities

opportunities of information, and is inquiſitive enough to obtain them) inquire into the original condition of our nuns, and inſpect a few of their faces at the ſame time; and I warrant he will find, that the greateſt part of them in their maiden ſtate were very poor, and that very few of them would have had in the world ſuch powers of attraction as to ſtand a fair chance for huſbands.

Where then is the great harm of having them parcelled out into nunneries, and let them live there from the eſtates belonging to them, and from their manual labour? I grant, that ſome rich and handſome girls may ſometimes be found within their walls. But in a world like ours, is it really poſſible to have every thing perfectly right? It is enough if, in the groſs, inſtitutions which are found agreeable to the prejudices of a people, are not very detrimental to their welfare.

I ſay that amongſt our nobility and people of eaſy fortunes, we have but few

old maidens, and amongſt our low people we have ſtill fewer.

To prove the firſt part of my aſſertion cannot be in my power; therefore I give the reader full liberty to credit it or not. But for the ſecond I refer him to Mr. Sharp's book, where it is ſaid that the Italians ſcarcely ever will have unmarried ſervants; contrary to the general cuſtom of England, where to be unmarried is an indiſpenſible requiſite in ſervants of either ſex.

Beſides the above exaggerations about our nuns and our girls locked up in nunneries, many proteſtant travel-writers have thought proper to affirm, that the Italians are ſo naturally cruel, as frequently to compel their unhappy daughters to take the veil. But when we conſult Mr. Sharp's liſt, and compare the number of our nuns with that of our unmarried women and girls, the impoſture will glaringly ſhow itſelf. If this practice was common among us, how could the proportion

portion be only ſuch as that of nine thouſand to three hundred and ten thouſand? However I allow that the caſe will ſometimes happen, and that parents will force a poor daughter into a nunnery: but far from being generally ſo cruel, the Italian parents are ſo generally indulgent, that by far the greateſt part of them are very ſorry when their girls take it into their ſimple heads to turn nuns. Far from clapping them forcibly, or even chearfully, into convents, they do every thing in their power to ſet their brains aright whenever they diſcover them thus inclined. They ridicule or ſcold them as ſoon as they declare any ſuch intention; and if ridiculing and ſcolding will not do, they take time to comply with their deſire. They dreſs them as genteely as they can, and carry them to opera's, balls, maſquarades, public walks, and other ſuch places where young men ogle, and bow, and whiſper, and talk loud, and perform all other acts of gallantry. They are in fine

permitted

permitted all ſorts of decent diverſions to reconcile them with the world. If nothing will do, and girls ſtand it out ſtubbornly, then parents muſt ſubmit, and they are made nuns, as the influence of the moon, a diſappointment in a firſt love, a deſire of ſhifting the ſcene of life, and ſome other ſuch latent cauſes, is then conſtrued by holy people into an evident call from heaven. But ſtill we muſt take notice that they are not made nuns as ſoon as they enter the convent. They muſt undergo a ſtate of probation, which is called *il Noviziato*. This ſtate in ſome convents continues a whole year, and in ſome others three years. Should the girls alter their mind within that time, they are preſently ſent back to their own homes. But if the nuns like the probationer, it is a hundred to one ſhe eſcapes them not; for they will then wheedle and careſs her at ſuch a rate, as to make her ſteadily perſiſt in her reſolution.

Few

Few are the Italian parents who do not go through all the above formality before they give their conſent in ſuch caſes. Yet, as I ſaid, it will ſometimes happen that a girl is compelled by deſigned ill uſage at home to ſave herſelf in a nunnery. Inſtances of that kind are rare and ſtriking. They excite indignation at the time, and ſerve as warnings afterwards. An adventure happened in my time at Milan, which as long as it is remembered will deter our few unnatural parents from treating their daughters in ſuch a manner. The adventure was this.

The father and mother of a young lady took it into their fancy to make a nun of her, whether ſhe would or not. With ſuch an infernal ſcheme in their heads, it may eaſily be imagined, that they tried all arts of perſuaſion, and when theſe failed, that they had recourſe to rougher means. The unfortunate creature was at laſt overpowered by ill-treatment, and ſubmitted herſelf to fall a victim to their barbarity.

Being

Being ſenſible of the impoſſibility of changing their cruel reſolution, ſhe declared at laſt that ſhe was ready to comply with it. She performed her *Noviziato*; and when the twelve-month was elapſed, went through the hated ceremony, made her vows on the outſide of the gate, as is uſual, and jumped with a ſeeming alacrity on the fatal ſide of the threſhold. The company that had aſſiſted at the unhallowed ſacrifice was preparing to retire, and the diſmal gate ready to be ſhut for ever upon her, when ſhe turned to her parents, and begged on her knees to ſpeak one word to them in private. The requeſt could not be denied. They were ſhown into the parlatory, the poor lamb at the inſide of the gate, and the two wolves at the outer. On her entering the room the unhappy wretch locked the door behind herſelf with a double turn: then changing at once her countenance, and appearing no more humble and

ſmiling,

ſmiling, ſhe began to expoſtulate with them in a reſolute tone, reproaching them in the moſt forcible terms with their diabolical cruelty. From expoſtulation and reproach ſhe proceeded to curſes and execrations; and this with a tone of voice ſo loud and full of rage, that the nuns could hear her very plain from without. They haſtened to knock at the door, and begged of her to pacify herſelf and open it. The father ſtood interdicted, and the mother trembled: both had loſt their powers of ſpeech. My hand ſhakes as I write the concluſion of this horrible tale. The deſperate young lady, after having given vent to her juſt rage, tied haſtily one of her garters to the outward bars of the grate, and ſtrangled herſelf in a moment: nor could the diſmal act be hindered by the piercing cries of the father and mother, their wretched daughter being dead before the door could be opened by the terrified nuns.

I leave

I leave the reader to imagine what peace and comfort the two black ſouls enjoyed after the adventure, which rendered them univerſally deteſted; and what a remedy this muſt have proved againſt ſuch ſort of barbarity in parents.

Having now given an idea of the number of our Italian nuns, and of the young ladies intruſted to their care for education, I muſt tell the reader, that he is likewiſe groſsly miſled by the travel-writers when they inform him, that our nunneries are all very amply endowed, and ſuperfluouſly rich. This is far from being true: there are ſcarcely twenty nunneries throughout Italy poſſeſſed of greater funds than what are neceſſary to maintain them. On the contrary, the greateſt part of them are ſo ſlenderly provided, that their poor inhabitants would fare but very indifferently, if they did not endeavour to better their hard condition by means of their manual labour. Some of them therefore work with their needles, ſome knit ſtockings, ſome make

ribbands, garters, buttons, flowers, cakes, and other little things for ſale. Of whatever they earn, one part is for the community and the other for themſelves. The life they lead is certainly not luxurious, and nothing but an early habit could make it endurable. They all go to bed early at night, and riſe betimes in the morning, as they are never allowed more than ſeven hours ſleep. Some orders practiſe diſcipline or ſcourging, and ſome not. Thoſe that practiſe it are the moſt numerous; and the buſineſs is done before they lay themſelves to reſt, in ſuch a manner as to be heard by their ſiſters in the next cells. However the mother abbeſs excuſes it whenever they requeſt it of her.

As ſoon as the morning appears, and in winter long before, they get up and go to ſing their prayers in the choir. Then to breakfaſt, which takes no time, as it conſiſts but of a bit of bread and a glaſs of water. Their dinners are likewiſe very frugal.

frugal. A ſoup, a ſlice of bouilli, and a bit of cheeſe, with ſome fruit, is all they cuſtomarily have; and their ſuppers are ſtill ſcantier. In Lent and the Advent they fare ſtill worſe, for they have but one meagre diſh in the morning with a ſallad, and only bread and fruit in the evening. Poor things! They ſcarcely ever get a belly-full but when they receive a new nun, at Eaſter, at Chriſtmas, and on the yearly return of the day which is dedicated to their patron-ſaint. They faſt likewiſe on Fridays and Saturdays throughout the year, and ſing and pray in the choir three or four hours every day at different times.

If they have any little penſion from their families, as is generally the caſe, or if they are ingenious and laborious, they are enabled to procure themſelves ſome chocolate and coffee; and they are all very ambitious to have ſome proviſion of theſe two things, that they may regale themſelves and their viſiters: nor can their relations

relations and friends make them a more acceptable preſent than chocolate and coffee; and ſnuff likewiſe, for they are all very fond of it. Both in the morning and afternoon they are allowed ſome *hours of parlatory*, as they call it. There they receive their viſiters, and ſit chatting with them through the iron-grate. This grate is double and very narrow throughout Italy. At Venice only it is not ſo: nay, the partitions there are ſo very large, that one may conveniently ſhake hands with them. But the largeneſs of the Venetian grates has ruined the reputation of the Venetian nuns.

An Engliſh lady, when ſhe reads this account, will be ready to think, that theſe unhappy creatures, cloſely confined, praying much, ſcourging often, working hard, and eating little, muſt all be very puny, very unhealthy, and quite out of humour with themſelves and with the world. Yet they are ſubject to very few

maladies, and live in general very long lives. Then they are all to appearance gay and lively. Though their trade be chiefly devotion, not many of them are truly devout. They look upon their numerous pious exercises as a piece of business, and chaunt or recite their Latin prayers in the choir by habit, without any farther view than that of consuming the time which must unavoidably be employed in it. Then not a few of them are in love with young gentlemen or with young friars; and when they are in love, they make it a point to be very faithful, and never coquet with other men. But few British ladies would care to be in love after the unsubstantial manner of our nuns, as their silly loves must absolutely end in nothing else but sweet words, kind glances, and warm billet-doux. This my female readers will say is very comical; and so it is. Yet the number is not small of our Italians, who prefer being in love with a nun rather than with any secular lady:

lady: and I ſtill cannot help laughing at myſelf for having once carried my Platonic notions ſo far, as to be of that way of thinking.

It has ſometimes happened, that a young nun has been ſeduced from her nunnery, and her lover has found means to run away with her. But this happens very ſeldom, as their gates are well watched: beſides that the attempt is dangerous, as a man would be impriſoned for life, if not condemned to death, were he to be overtaken in the flight. Then the poor things are ſo accuſtomed to their own ways, and know ſo little of the world, that it is next to impoſſible to induce any of them to make her eſcape, even when they are moſt ſincerely enamoured. They know, if they run away, that they muſt go to Geneva or to ſome other heretical country; and their ideas of heretics are moſt frightful. It is ſcarcely poſſible to make them believe that heretics have juſt ſuch eyes and noſes as we have, and that they are

like us to all intents and purpoſes. I have ſometimes brought an heretic to viſit ſome of them, and they did not ſcruple to give him a diſh of chocolate, and prattle with him with tolerable freedom. But when he was gone they would generally tell me, that there was ſomething very odd in the creature; and few nuns can be brought to think that it is poſſible for women to be in love with heretics. However they will certainly pray for any heretic they have once ſeen, and beg of God to make him a Chriſtian. Moſt of the Venetian nuns know better; but in all other parts of Italy, eſpecially in little towns, they are in general thus abſurd.

Though they are not very devout, yet each has ſome favourite ſaint or angel, to whom ſhe recommends herſelf, her lover, her friends, and her affairs, which, as I ſaid, go little farther than making and ſelling ſome trifles.

Their love to their convents is aſtoniſhing. Many of them have aſſured me in

moſt ſolemn terms, that they ſhould be miſerable every where elſe. Of this love a Venetian nun, not many years ago, has given an inſtance which I think pretty ſurpriſing. She was in love with a gentleman, and had found means in maſk-time to get out of the convent at night by the connivance of the nun-portreſs. Once on her return home, ſome hours before day-break, ſhe found the gate ſhut, contrary to agreement with her friend. What to do in ſo ſad a ſituation? The lover propoſed an eſcape, which could eaſily have been effected, as Venice has no gates, and he a man of fortune. He ſaw no other means to ſave her and himſelf. But the courageous damſel could not be prevailed upon to do this. She bid him get inſtantly away, and leave her to herſelf. Then ſhe directed the gondoliers to the patriarch's palace, and inſiſted to ſpeak with him immediately upon an affair of great importance. The patriarch ordered her up to his bed-ſide, heard her caſe, was

intreated to ſave her, and ſuggeſted what was to be done. The patriarch got up in a moment; ordered ſome of his prieſts to be called inſtantly; crouded with her and them in her gondola; and went ſtraight to the convent. There the mother-abbeſs was called to the gate. The patriarch told her he had juſt heard, that ſhe minded her office ſo little as to permit ſome of the nuns to go out of the convent at night: that he was informed of one actually out; and to aſſure himſelf of the fact, was come to viſit the cells himſelf; inſiſting at the ſame time on her retiring inſtantly to her own apartment, as he did not want her company in his ſhort viſit. He then went up-ſtairs, followed by his prieſts and by the nun habited like one of them. As ſhe got by her cell, ſhe ſlily dropt in, and probably was undreſſed and a-bed in a moment. When ſhe was ſafe, the patriarch went back to the abbeſs, aſked pardon for the trouble and the ill-grounded ſuſpicion, and took his leave. A great preſence

of

mind in the nun, and a laudable inſtance of prudence in the patriarch!

The generoſity and compaſſion of our nuns are very great; and they will ſtint themſelves as much as they can in order to relieve the neceſſitous. They adhere to one another very cloſely, and never betray one another's ſecrets to the mother-abbeſs, the confeſſor, or any body elſe. Nay, their fidelity goes ſo far when entruſted with a ſecret, that even rivalry and jealouſy cannot induce them to violate it. Their attachment to their beauty does not forſake them on their forſaking the world; and they are moſt ſcrupulouſly ſtudious in the adjuſting of their veils and dreſſes. Thoſe who pretend to know them thoroughly, affirm, that they fall often in love with one another; and happy ſhe who gets a female adorer. The loving nun will then make her bed, ſweep her cell, and adorn it with flowers: ſhe will waſh her ſmall linen; help her in her

which a few centuries ago ſplit one univerſal church into many churches; proteſtants of all countries and denominations have endeavoured to make thoſe of their reſpective communions believe, that this body of men is not only uſeleſs but obnoxious to the commonwealth; and have repeatedly given it as their opinion, that it would be very good policy totally to aboliſh them for the advantage of religion and the good of mankind. But who will blindly ſubſcribe to the ſentiments of thoſe, who are avowedly prejudiced by difference of tenets, and as much to be ſuſpected of fanaticiſm as the fanatics they accuſe.

This matter ought to be conſidered in the ſpirit of philoſophy and politics, and not in the bigottry either of affection or hatred. As in my late long ramble through Italy I have taken ſome pains to examine our friars, and have had both the will and the means of ſo doing, more than the generality of proteſtants, I muſt own that

their

their outrageous invectives againſt them, have at preſent little effect upon me, and that their want of moderation upon this point, as well as upon many others, cannot be approved by men of ſober thinking. It may be true in the main, that our friars are proportionably as viciouſly inclined, as any other body of men of equal number, as they cannot be exempted from the common weakneſſes of mankind. But to abuſe and vilify them indiſcriminately, is certainly an act of the greateſt injuſtice, as their body certainly abounds, and perhaps more than any other, in good and valuable individuals, and ſuch as have on many occaſions done eminent ſervice to their country.

Many, a great many (I muſt ſay it again) are the falſhoods aſſerted as truths by itinerant writers with regard to the Italians; and amongſt theſe, their ſurmiſes as to the numbers of our friars, cannot be left unnoticed. Miſſon, amongſt others, after having ſaid, that "*the poor Italian*

"*ladies*

"*ladies are kept in perpetual confinement,*" and wanting to give a reaſon for this Mahometan cuſtom of ours, adds with great ſcurrility, that this is "*a neceſſary piece* "*of caution in Italy, where* THREE QUAR- "TERS *of the men, living under the inſup-* "*portable reſtraint of a forced celibacy,* "*would make a dreadful havock on their* "*neighbour's property, if ſome means were* "*not uſed to prevent ſuch diſorders;*" that is, if the Italian ladies were not kept in perpetual confinement.

But to form ſome judgment on the ſenſe and credibility of this account of monſieur Miſſon, we muſt obſerve, that of the fourteen millions which Italy contains, (one half of which are to be ſuppoſed females) the number of our friars muſt be little leſs than *two millions*, and of our ſecular clergy near *three millions and a half*, as our ſecular clergy is computed to be about one third more numerous than the regular.

None

None indeed of the itinerant writers ever took ſo high a flight as Miſſon. They have been contented only to ſay, that our friars are *very numerous*, *prodigiouſly numerous*, or *numerous beyond credibility*. But as theſe and other like expreſſions have no determinate meaning, my reader will be directly put in a condition to aſcertain their number, if he will but caſt his eye upon Mr. Sharp's LIST *of the inhabitants of Tuſcany* *.

* As in the courſe of this work I have had occaſion ſeveral times to have recourſe to that liſt, it will be better to copy it here out of Mr. Sharp's book. It is really almoſt the only thing worth notice in it.

Married men,	142,699
——— women,	143,590
Unmarried men,	180,348
——— women,	190,874
Boys,	128,199
Girls,	119,986
Churchmen,	3,529
Prieſts,	8,355
Monks,	5,548
Hermits,	144
Nuns,	9,349
Proteſtant men,	230
——— women,	55
Jews, men,	4,464
—— women,	4,513
	941,883

By

By that list it appears, that the proportion of our friars to the rest of the Italians, is scarcely that of *six thousand to a million*. So that, supposing the Italians to be about *fourteen millions*, it follows that the number of our friars amounts to about *eighty-four thousand*, and not to the *three quarters* of our men, according to the dream of that absurd and prattling Frenchman.

These eighty-four thousand friars are divided into about twenty orders, some more and some less numerous when considered with regard to each other. Each of these orders, as every body knows, is principally distinguished from the rest by the cut and colour of their habits, which are all of different make.

Each order has a peculiar manner of living; yet, even when narrowly inspected, the difference is not very discernable, as all their institutions agree in this main point, that they are all to live an exemplary life, and be models of sobriety,

chaſtity, and humility, according to the rules of their original inſtitution, from which it is impoſſible they ſhould all and equally deviate. Therefore, inſtead of entering into a minute detail of their orders, which would take up too much time, I will here ſingly divide them into two claſſes.

Thoſe orders that have no funds of their own to live upon, go amongſt us by the general name of *mendicant friars:* and as I have no general name for thoſe who have ſuch funds, I muſt here term them the *non-mendicant*. To diſtinguiſh them by the appellations of *rich* and *poor* would be improper, as the mendicant, though wholly dependant upon charity, are not poor in reality; and the non-mendicant are far from being all rich. Even amongſt the Benedictines and the Jeſuits, there are few convents in Italy poſſeſſed of more than what is barely neceſſary for the maintenance of their inhabitants.

I could

I could never have ſufficient information exactly to determine the proportion between theſe two claſſes. The common opinion is, that the non-mendicant are to the mendicant *as one to four*.

There are two methods, by which the mendicant friars raiſe thoſe voluntary contributions, without which they could not ſubſiſt. One is by ſaying numerous maſſes, for which, under the ſpecious title of alms, they are paid about ſixpence each throughout Italy: the other is, by ſending their lay-brothers every day begging about the ſtreet of their towns, and to the houſes in the neighbouring country. A lay-brother is a kind of inferiour friar, who is tied by the vows of chaſtity, poverty, and obedience, as well as the fathers, as they call them; but never receives the order of prieſthood, and is a kind of ſervant to the convent. A lay-brother is eaſily diſtinguiſhable from a father by his head, which is ſhaved all over; whereas a father's has a crown of hair

hair left by the barber round the higher part, as my readers may have obſerved in pictures.

It is probable that both theſe methods of ſubſiſtence would prove very pernicious, were the number of our mendicant friars ſo very large, or did they live ſo luxuriouſly, as many diſingenuous writers have endeavoured to make the world believe. But as their fare is very ſcanty, and their numbers bear little proportion to the inhabitants of the places where they are eſtabliſhed, both theſe means prove quite effectual with regard to their eating and drinking. And the public charity has invariably been ſo good a fund to them ever ſince they were inſtituted, that they never yet were in danger of periſhing for want of the few things that are neceſſary to man. Their lodging coſts them nothing; and the dreſs of each individual (which will laſt many years) is ſcarcely worth fifteen ſhillings, being made of a very

coarſe woollen ſtuff. They wear neither linen nor ſtockings, and have wooden ſandals inſtead of ſhoes.

However, though they are ſeldom or never abſolutely diſtreſſed for eating, drinking, cloaths, and lodging, yet they live in general a very hard and uncomfortable life. They muſt riſe every day very early to ſing mattins in the choir *, ſay their maſſes, and hear people's confeſſions.

This laſt buſineſs many of my readers will be apt to think a very agreeable occupation to the friars, as it muſt, in a good meaſure ſatisfy that natural and inſatiable curioſity which all men have of knowing each other's ſecrets. Yet I never

* *Choir* in Italy we call that large empty ſpace behind the great altar of a church, where prieſts, friars, and nuns aſſemble in circuit to ſing. In churches ſerved by prieſts or friars, that ſpace has a communication with the church: but in the churches belonging to nuns, it is ſeparated by a partition-wall, that hinders people from ſeeing them when they are on that duty.

could

could find any confeſſor pleaſed with his taſk. Some of them, whoſe veracity I have no reaſon to doubt, have aſſured me, that this buſineſs is extremely tedious, becauſe the largeſt number of their penitents are intirely unknown to them; becauſe they do almoſt nothing elſe but repeat the ſame ſtories over and over; becauſe they cannot ſee their faces; and becauſe thoſe who commit ſingular and curious ſins ſeldom go to tell them, and only the vulgar teaze them for whole hours with their petty ſcruples, ſimple fooleries, and ridiculous vices. If all people undiſtinctly were to tell them their doings honeſtly and without diſguiſe, which few men will do under any ſanction, the confeſſors might ſeem to have means of knowing the world better than any other ſet of men: but this is far from being the caſe, the greateſt part of them being remarkably ignorant on this head: and I have often had occaſion to obſerve, that our confeſſors, both friars

and prieſts, have not only a great affection, but an unbounded veneration for women, and appear not to value men much: and though that veneration may be attributed to the ſex's ſuperior goodneſs, of which they are informed by means of confeſſion, yet many of our wags ſuſpect, that the confeſſors never can read the hearts of females, and that they are more inſincere in their confeſſions than the men. Be this as it will, it is certainly obſervable in all countries, that the beſt and ſimpleſt people are thoſe that reverence women moſt.

When the fatiguing taſk of the morning is over, the friars go to dinner, (conſtantly at twelve o'clock) which is always very ſcanty, as I ſaid, even in thoſe days in which the lay-brothers have been moſt ſucceſsful in their ſearch. While they dine they do not ſpeak; but liſten to one of their brethren who reads ſome book as long as dinner laſts. After dinner a full hour is allowed for recreation, which

conſiſts

conſiſts of walking about their garden in ſummer, (for each convent has a garden) or ſitting by a common fire-ſide in winter, chatting or diſputing with each other: after which they go to ſing again for another hour; and when this is over, thoſe who chuſe to go out, kneel before one of their ſuperiours, kiſs the hem of his garment, and beg permiſſion for ſo doing, which is ſeldom denied. Thoſe who chuſe to ſtay at home, generally retire to their cells to read, write, or do ſome manual work. At ſun-ſet they muſt always be within doors to ſing prayers before ſupper; after which they all withdraw, and go immediately to bed if they chuſe, or look over their books for an hour or two; and this is almoſt the only time they can freely beſtow on the acquiſition of learning.

As their meals are not plentiful, ſo their beds are none of the ſofteſt; but conſiſt of a matreſs ſtuffed with ſtraw or leaves of turkey-corn, with a coarſe coverlet of

cloth, and no ſheets. There they throw themſelves down with their under-garment on. About midnight they are awakened with the rattle of a very noiſy inſtrument ſhaken about the convent by a lay-brother, and called again to prayers for another hour; after which they return to their beds till day-break.

This interruption in their ſleep many of them have aſſured me to be their greateſt hardſhip, and that no length of time ever can reconcile them to it, as it does to all their other duties. And indeed one would be ready to think it not only hard, but tending likewiſe to impair their conſtitution. Yet their unaltered temperance and uniform manner of living, ſcreen them from many of the diſorders incident to ſuch as live in eaſe and plenty; and very few of them appear ſickly or puny; but all look florid, robuſt, and not diſcontented; which by their enemies is conſtantly attributed to their plentiful diet, and lazy way of living.

From

From this picture of their general and conſtant mode of domeſtic life, it may eaſily be conjectured, that there is truth in what the mendicant friars ſay, that their maintenance never amounts to ſixpence a day for each individual: and as a good part of what is given is afforded in kind to their lay-brothers in their begging expeditions, and what is hard money muſt neceſſarily return to the public, and ſtill circulate, I do not ſee for what reaſon they ſhould be conſidered by proteſtant politicians as ſo great a burthen to ſociety, eſpecially in a country which is without contradiction one of the moſt fertile and naturally rich in the whole world. The king of Pruſſia maintains a much greater number of ſoldiers than we do of monks, and in a country too, which is much ſmaller and poorer; and there may be a great doubt whether ſoldiers contribute more to the particular advantage of a country, or to the intereſt of mankind at large, than our monks of Italy: yet, in

the eyes of ſome ſort of travellers, that king is a wiſe and glorious monarch, principally for his maintaining a large number of troops, and we are an abſurd and bigotted people for feeding ſome thouſands of monks.

But I muſt here obſerve, once for all, that I do not mean to condemn the wiſdom of this nation, or of others, who have aboliſhed theſe inſtitutions. When I wrote to my countrymen any thing concerning the Engliſh, I have never preſumed to impeach them becauſe they are without friars. I have not fallen into that impertinent cuſtom of travellers, of cenſuring inſolently every thing which is not conformable to what is obſerved at home. While I ſpeak of the effects produced in Italy by the things that we have, I wiſh it were in my power to bring men to the cuſtom of examining ſo far into what they ſee, as to believe it poſſible, that many things which may for their inconvenience have been aboliſhed very properly

properly in one country, may yet have ſo much of uſefulneſs in them, as to make it not altogether abſurd to retain them in another.

The life led by the greateſt part of the non-mendicants, is pretty much like that of the mendicants. They alſo have their frequent daily ſinging in the choir, their maſſes to ſay, the confeſſions to hear, and their ſlender dinners and ſuppers to eat. But as they wear linen, ſtockings, and ſhoes, have better beds, lie in ſheets undreſſed, and have not their ſleep interrupted, their condition is certainly comfortable when compared to that of the mendicants. The mendicants are for the moſt part the offspring of poor people, and almoſt all have a vulgar appearance and ſervile manners. To be a mendicant coſts but little money; and with about thirty or forty pounds a man may make ſure of a maintenance for life in a mendicant order. But the non-mendicants muſt be at the expence of two or three

hundred

hundred to be received: therefore they are in general better born and educated, and get conſequently an eaſy admiſſion to the nobility and gentry; which is not often the caſe with the mendicants, who are not much regarded by the polite and opulent, except they have great perſonal merit. But by way of compenſation, they are more reverenced by the common people, and more welcome to their houſes, becauſe they behave more humbly, and lead a harder and more exemplary life.

I have already obſerved, that a conſiderable part of the mendicant's income conſiſts in the maſſes they celebrate: yet the non-mendicants do not neglect this article neither, as it produces a pretty good ſum in ſpecie to their convents. If I remember well, the Jeſuits are the only order that ſay their maſſes for nothing.

This buſineſs of maſs-ſaying is uppermoſt in a friar's thoughts, and the excellence and virtue of the maſs are a topic, on which their rhetoric is never exhauſted. A

maſs,

maſs, ſay they, is a moſt indiſpenſible refrigerative to the poor ſouls that are burning in purgatory, and a mighty ſcare-crow to fright away the devil. A good number of maſſes eaſily obtain the faithful a power of perſeverance in righteouſneſs, and ſooner or later diſentangle a poor ſinner from his bad habits. It will avert evil of any kind, and be productive of temporal as well as ſpiritual happineſs. Without maſſes individuals would be miſerable, and the public overſpread with calamity.

Notions like theſe, forcibly and inceſſantly inculcated into the minds of the people, have ſuch an effect, that few are the Italians who have not ſome maſs celebrated from time to time, and eſpecially upon important occurrencies. Nor would any of them ever dare to make his laſt will without bequeathing a ſum, great or ſmall, for this purpoſe. Should any body, eſpecially the rich and eaſy, forget a legacy of ſo much importance to his own ſoul, the

the plurality would look upon him as an unbeliever and an heretic, and both the friars and the ſecular clergy would not be very forward to defend his memory againſt aſperſions of this kind, as without maſſes neither friar nor prieſt could ſubſiſt long, and preſerve their influence over people's mind, as was the caſe in proteſtant countries ever ſince they aboliſhed the maſs, which has rendered their clergy abſolutely dependant on the political eſtabliſhments ordered in their reſpective countries for their maintenance and welfare.

All mendicant friars, and the non-mendicant too, have got the trick of calling themſelves poor: but this is mere cant and equivocation. No one is to be conſidered as poor, but when his poverty renders him contemptible and ridiculous, as real poverty infallibly does. The friars, in ſpight of their pretended poverty, live well after their own manner; a manner they have choſen voluntarily. They are reſpected by individuals, and have a competent

petent ſhare of power and influence with the public. Each of them has a chance of becoming a biſhop, a cardinal, and even a ſovereign prince, and head of the Roman church. Why therefore ſhould they call themſelves poor? This, I allow, is monkiſh diſingenuity.

By this account the reader will ſee, that the two hardeſt conditions of a friar's life, conſiſts in his indiſpenſible attendance at the choir and confeſſional, which proves tedious, and the interruption in his ſleep, which is always grievous, as it is repugnant to nature. Nor has a friar a poſſibility of exempting himſelf from theſe obligations, but by his attaining to ſo much credit in his convent, as to deſerve to be choſen ſuperior, or be permitted to turn preacher. When a friar is ſo lucky as to obtain one or other of theſe honours, it is in his option to conform to theſe hard taſks: beſides that, to be a ſuperior entitles him to a diſh more at dinner if he chuſes it; and to be a preacher

renders

renders him master of a small sum of money, which he may employ as he pleases.

We have sermons preached on every holiday in almost all our churches: but Lent is the high time for preaching, as it is then done every day, Saturdays excepted, generally from the hour of eleven to twelve in the morning, and every preacher paid for so doing. All our Lent-pulpits have a salary annexed to them; and it is in Lent that our friars display their best powers of oratory.

If a friar is so happy as to obtain the public esteem by his sacred eloquence, he looks upon himself as a made man; for he will then be emulously invited by bodies of parishioners, corporations, and other people to their Lent-pulpits. Nor is the permission for his accepting those invitations ever denied, together with that of living in a private lodging, where there is no convent of his order nearly adjoining to the church in which he is to preach.

By

By theſe means many a friar rambles about from town to town, from village to village, and even from province to province once a year; and for about two months keeps out of his convent, which is always a pleaſing thing to them all. However their preaching obliges them to take great pains, and proves pretty heavy as long as it laſts, becauſe, after having compoſed their ſermons, they muſt commit them to memory from the firſt word to the laſt, that they may be able to deliver them with perfect freedom and volubility. Should a preacher ever heſitate a moment unneceſſarily, or loſe the thread of his ſermon, he would raiſe a laugh throughout the audience; nor is any of them ever allowed to read his ſermon, as is the caſe in ſeveral proteſtant countries. It is true that we have our Romaines and our Whitfields, who are vain enough to preach extempore, and ſay what comes uppermoſt: but ſuch preachers are ſcarcely the favourites of any but the loweſt rabble, and

are ſeldom invited to good pulpits. Therefore thoſe travellers through Italy, who only deſcribe ſuch ſpiritual mountebanks, give us as falſe accounts, as if an Italian in England were to take the meaſure of the Engliſh pulpit-eloquence from what he hears at the Tabernacle or Moorfields. I am very ready to acknowledge that the Engliſh have produced the beſt body of ſermons in the world for ſolidity and good ſenſe; and if any enter into competition with them, it is not the Italians, but the French. Yet we have preachers who are of a claſs very different from thoſe deſcribed by Mr. Sharp and other ſuch travellers, and our Segneri and our Granelli would not diſgrace the pulpit of any church or any nation.

The ſalaries annexed to the Lent-pulpits are greater or leſs, according to the reſpective places. In large towns there are pulpits that afford a hundred pounds ſalary; but of theſe there are very few throughout Italy. The pope himſelf gives

no

no more than this ſum: and I have heard, that the beſt pulpit in Italy is that of the cathedral in Turin, becauſe the king of Sardinia allows the Lent-preacher three thouſand Piedmonteſe livres, which is near a hundred and fifty pounds, beſides a diſh from his own kitchen every day. One may eaſily imagine that, when a friar gets a pulpit of only fifty or ſixty crowns, he is looked upon as a very reſpectable member of his community, and much reverenced by his fellow friars, as this is with them an inconteſtible proof of his ſuperiour abilities.

The ſeveral orders of our friars are in reality no great friends to each other, though they be ſo in all outward appearance. Some orders hold oppoſite opinions in ſome moral and theological points, which creates much animoſity between them. The vain diſputes between the Thomiſts and the Scotiſts, the Probabiliſts and the Probabilioriſts, have long divided our friars into nearly equal parties; and

their long treatiſes for and againſt the grace efficient and the grace ſufficient, with their numerous quarto's and folio's ſtuffed with idle conjectures about the immaculate or non-immaculate conception of our bleſſed lady, have filled their libraries with loads of rubbiſh: nor will they have done wrangling upon trifles as long as they exiſt. Each party will have it, that their arguments are perfectly concluſive: but a Jeſuit never yet was convinced by a Dominican, nor a Franciſcan ever ſubdued by a Carmelite. Individuals ſtick faſt to the opinions received by their reſpective orders, nor does any ever deſert his ſtandard. In diſquiſitions of this nature too many friars fool away great part of their time and abilities: but ſtill let us grant, thar ſuch a vain employment of their abilities and time exempts them often in a good meaſure from a worſe; and if it is not very uſeful, it is at leaſt innocent.

I never

I never had any great leiſure to examine the polemical works of our friars, as my ſtudies have leaned another way. But I have ſtrong reaſons to ſuſpect them all of great diſingenuity in their diſputations, as I know for certain that few or none of them ever play fair in their controverſies with the ſecular learned. It has ſhocked me more than once to read their writings of this kind; and I ſhall in particular never forget one father Branda, a Barnabite of Milan, and father Buonafede, a Celeſtine of Comacchio, and the impudence with which they both have lately managed their controverſies on mere belles-lettres againſt two Italian gentlemen, interpreting wrong, quoting falſe, telling lies of every kind, and attacking the moral character of their antagoniſts without ſufficient provocation, in order to make their cauſe good, though moſt evidently bad.

This diſingenuity in our friars, no leſs injudicious than deteſtable, has loſt them

in a great meaſure the good-will and favour of our learned, as it has long done that of the proteſtant, who nevertheleſs have, like them, been often guilty of the ſame crime themſelves.

One of the oddeſt points of our friars' ambition, is that of having abundance of ſaints of their reſpective orders. Thoſe that have already a good many, deſpiſe thoſe that have few, and are mightily envied by them. Nor is it eaſy to conceive what efforts they all make at Rome and in every other place to encreaſe the number of their ſaints by canonization. When this happens, and a new ſaint is procured, there are as great rejoicings throughout their whole order, as if each friar had been himſelf legally declared a ſaint. Had they artillery on ſuch occaſions, they would make it roar much louder than princes do when their armies obtain a ſignal victory. For want of cannon, they have their bells rung at a moſt horrible rate for full eight days, to the

the no ſmall diſturbance of their neighbourhood.

It is their ſtrong affection to their reſpective orders, that makes all our friars ardently pant after ſuch whimſical honours: and it is ſurpriſing to conſider the ſtrange things they will aſſert both in their diſcourſe and in print of their beloved ſaints. Our Saviour is ſcarcely a greater ſaint than St. Francis: St. Dominick has received letters from heaven wrote by the Holy Trinity; and I do not remember who it was that was married when ſtill alive to the Virgin Mary. Theſe fooleries have been termed *blaſphemies* by proteſtant writers; and I have no great objection to the term. But, as we know better than the generality of proteſtants what melancholy effects a recluſe life will produce, we only call them "*freneſie frateſche*," *monaſtic madneſs*. Let us only take notice, that many of theſe ſtrange ſubjects do prodigiouſly well in painting, and that many of our moſt excellent artiſts have

done wonders, when aſſiſted by friarly mithology.

One cannot help being ſurpriſed likewiſe at the pains they take; and the trouble they will undergo, to augment the credit and extend the influence of their orders. In their miſſions, as they call them, which generally laſt a whole week, they mount ſcaffolds erected on purpoſe in the midſt of ſquares and other open places. There after ſome long and pathetic exhortation to the people who aſſemble in crouds around them, they beat themſelves with ropes, and ſometimes with iron chains, in a moſt ſhocking manner, till they draw blood from their naked backs, groan, howl, and denounce hell-fire to hardened ſinners in as frightful a tone as their voices will permit, to the great compunction and ſatisfaction of the rabble, whoſe tears always run plentifully on ſuch occaſions.

I remember the time when theſe miſſions were very frequent. However they have of late not been ſo common, and are

even

even prohibited in ſome places, as ſome of our governments have begun to obſerve, that they render weak people mad with devotion: an obſervation which ought to have been made long ago. Yet, where they are ſtill cuſtomary, the Jeſuits and the ſeveral Franciſcan orders ſignalize their zeal for the ſalvation of ſinners in this ſort of ſpiritual tragi-comedy. The other orders however diſdain this method of getting a reputation for ſanctity, and I never heard that they dealt in miſſions; which yet never prove quite unprofitable to convents, becauſe a collection is often made when the ſpirit of the ſpectators are raiſed to the higheſt pitch of enthuſiaſm by the miſſionaries' blood trickling down from their backs on the ſcaffold. It is true that the Franciſcans were forbidden by their inſtitutors *to touch money:* and I ſuppoſe that St. Francis, whom hiſtory *

* See a book intitled *Memoire iſtoriche di più uomini illuſtri della Toſcana*, printed at Leghorn in 1757, and

deſcribes as a very ſimple man, and truly pious, really meant to forbid them the uſe of riches in the ſtrongeſt ſenſe of the phraſe. Yet his ſordid followers take his command literally, and never touch any coin, not even with the tip of a finger: but a friar, who can get any money, has always ſome male or female devotee, who touches it for him, and keeps it for his uſe. Their money they chiefly lay out in handkerchiefs, night-caps, ſnuff, coffee, chocolate, and books; or in roſaries, prints, and medals, on which Madona's or ſaints are repreſented, to diſtribute amongſt thoſe who call themſelves their penitents; that is, thoſe who chuſe them for their confeſſors and directors of their conſciences. Beſides this, when they are

read that part of it intitled *Vita di Fra Elia da Cortona, primo generale dell' ordine di San Franceſco.* There is in it a very pleaſing delineation of St. Francis' perſonal character, and a moſt amuſing account of the ſteps he took to bring about the foundation of his order.

to tranſport themſelves from place to place, they muſt pay for their voitures if they do not chuſe to walk, and for their eating and lodging on the road, if they meet with inn-keepers ſo ſurly as to expect payment; which however is not often the caſe, eſpecially with the Franciſcans, and the Capuchines in particular, whoſe venerable beards and moſt humble deportment endear them to the vulgar much more than any other order.

Though, as I ſaid before, the ſtudies of our friars be not in general of any great ſervice to the learned, as they chiefly conſiſt of ſubtle diſquiſitions and uſeleſs caſuiſtry, yet ſtill new-modelled ſyſtems of theology and morality are publiſhed by ſome of them almoſt every year. Theſe books are ſeldom read by any but themſelves, and many of our learned ſcarcely know of their exiſtence. Yet, as they are greedily bought and read by friars of all orders, our printers generally give their authors ſome little ſum for the manuſcript. Many

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of them alſo compoſe lives of ſaints, collections of miracles, petty books of devotion, and other things of this kind, which the little vulgar can buy for a few pence; and many a friar, by theſe means, encreaſes his little ſtock of money, and is thus enabled to buy a better night-cap or a better handkerchief.

Of their churches they take the utmoſt care, that people may come to them with a good heart. They ſweep them very clean many times a day when it is neceſſary, and ſome part of their revenue, howſoever procured, is beſtowed in embelliſhing and adorning them with pictures, ſtatues, carving, gilding, tapeſtry, flowers, and all ſorts of ſightly baubles; and often by means of the moſt excellent muſic that the country can afford, both vocal and inſtrumental, render them the moſt agreeable places for the people to aſſemble in. They illuminate them even in day-time with a conſiderable number of

tapers

tapers and torches, eſpecially on holidays; which, together with the proceſſions, occaſions a conſiderable conſumption of wax, and conſequently no ſmall export of money out of all parts of Italy into Muſcovy and other countries. Yet our governments wink at this diſorder, as well as at ſome other little evils ariſing from their practices; and many a politician have I heard ſay, that ſomething muſt be ſacrificed to gratify the populace, and hinder them from raiſing in tumult, as they would probably do, were they not kept in perpetual good-humour by proceſſions, church-illuminations, and thoſe other things, wittily termed rareeſhows by the witty Mr. Sharp.

It is this conſideration, I ſuppoſe, which makes our government overlook alſo the inconvenience ariſing to the ſtate from the celibacy of the friars, which may poſſibly deprive the community of many families. But, ſince it is impoſſible to bring the bulk

bulk of mankind to any great degree of reaſonableneſs, I do not ſee that our governments are ſo impolitical as they are thought by ſtrangers, when they wink at ſomething that is bad, to avert what might probably be worſe.

I will not affirm it, becauſe ſuch things do not eaſily admit of poſitive proof one way or other; but I think it probable, that to the increaſe and influence of the friars, eſpecially the mendicants, we owe in a good meaſure the domeſtic and profound peace we have long enjoyed all over Italy, which is never diſturbed by commotions and popular ſeditions: and to them we may poſſibly be likewiſe obliged for the utter extinction of thoſe enraged parties and family-animoſities which diſtracted all Italy for ſeveral centuries, and filled it with innumerable murders and calamities. The friars cannot get any thing by civil feuds and diſſentions; therefore they make it a principal point to

preach

preach and recommend peace and love continually, and thus they tend at leaſt in ſome degree to keep us peaceable amongſt ourſelves.

The friars have been often ſtigmatized by ultramontane writers as very looſe and debauched: but the accuſation is ſurely ill-grounded and calumnious. Were their inclinations ever ſo bad, it would even be impoſſible for them to be publicly and groſsly vicious. In large cities ſome of them may play the libertine, and break one of their ſtricteſt vows without any great danger, as in large cities almoſt every body may hide himſelf in the croud. In Venice the convenience of maſquerade may be, for aught I know, a good cover to the immorality of ſome friars, as there they are all permitted to wear maſks as well as the reſt of the people. Yet in Venice, as well as in other places, they muſt behave with the greateſt circumſpection when they have a mind to be vicious, as otherwiſe they would not only be ſeverely reprimanded,

manded, but rigorouſly puniſhed, if they were to be noted for a looſe conduct, or gave the leaſt room for ſcandal or complaint. When they are guilty of groſs imprudence in point of morals, they are inſtantly ſent out of the way by their ſuperiours: and when we go to enquire after them at their convents, the common anſwer is, that they are juſt ſet out on a miſſion to the holy land; which anſwer is always interpreted, that they have been clapped up in perpetual confinement, or put ſecretly to death. No religious order will endure to be diſhonoured by the publicity of a ſcandalous adventure; and the friar who has had one, is ſeldom or never after ſeen in the world: ſo that, it may be concluded, if they are looſe and diſſolute, that no ultramontane writer has any eaſy means of knowing it, and that the works of itinerant pretended obſervers contain nothing elſe but mere defamation when they tax our friars of diſſoluteneſs.

Add

Add to this, that almoſt no order allows a friar the liberty of going abroad by himſelf. Each has always a companion aſſigned him by the ſuperiour whenever he aſks leave to go out, and thus they are a check upon each other.

Next to the accuſation of debauchery our friars are charged with lazineſs: but this is likewiſe a falſe charge. The greateſt part of them are continually and painfully employed either in or out of the convent. At home they muſt mind the choir, the confeſſional, and the church. They attend their own ſick and impotent. They clean their own cells, and employ beſides many hours in ſtudy and in reading lectures to the young friars, who for ſeveral years are kept under the ſtricteſt diſcipline, ſcarcely allowed to ſpeak among themſelves, much leſs to ſtrangers. No ſort of gaming is permitted them, but draughts and cheſs, and theſe only in the hours of recreation. And what do friars do when they go out in couples as uſual? They go to viſit the

ſick and aſſiſt the dying whenever they are called, for this is one of the principal points of their inſtitution. They walk up and down the ſtreets, ſeldom calling on their own families, or the few friends they had before their forſaking the world; or they go to ſee the functions of other friars, that they may give an account of them to their companions on their return. Many of them by way of relaxation from their unavoidable employments draw devotional pictures, carve crucifixes, make various toys, and delve and water their gardens. As they all take ſnuff, thoſe who have no great means of buying it, apply carefully to the cultivation of tobacco, and make it themſelves. The Capuchines and all ot her Franciſcans have many amongſt them who are weavers that make their own cloth, and many who play the tailors and ſow that cloth into garments for the uſe of the brotherhood. And I muſt not omit ſaying, that in the long catalogue of our moſt famed architects

tects and painters, ſome names of friars are to be found. Can people, whoſe actual profeſſion exempts them from the laſt degree of manual labour, be juſtly called a lazy people?

In the pope's dominions ſome few of their ſuperiours take ſometimes the liberty of going to an opera or play: but ſimple friars ſeldom or never obtain this permiſſion. At Naples they enjoy likewiſe ſome privilege of this kind: but in all other parts of Italy, eſpecially throughout Lombardy and Piedmont, no friar is ſuffered by the people in any ſuch place, and would be clamorouſly driven out as ſoon as perceived, as it happened once in my memory to two foreign friars: ſo that many of them have never ſeen in their whole life any kind of public diverſion, except Punchinello in the ſtreets. But when I ſay that friars do not reſort to the ſtage, or other public place of diverſion, the reader muſt always remember, that the cuſtoms of Venice are ſeldom to be included in

the general cuſtoms of Italy, as the laws and conſtitution of that city are notably different from thoſe of the other Italian ſtates. The friars therefore enjoy great freedom at Venice, which has given room for the proverbial ſaying, that " *Venezia* " *è il paradiſo de' frati e delle puttane,*" *Venice is the paradiſe of friars and whores.* However, let us not forget that in Venice the Jeſuits and all the Franciſcan orders never maſk; but live as ſtrictly and exemplarily as they do in other places, and ſcrupulouſly keep within doors even more in carnival than in any other time.

But the chief accuſation brought againſt our friars is, that they are moſt ſhockingly ignorant: and I will allow, that the plurality are ſo in a great meaſure, eſpecially the mendicants, and all thoſe who are bound by their inſtitutions to many hours of choir every day. This occupation fatigues them too much, and it is not ſurpriſing if it palls their appetite for knowledge. But why are they reproached with

not doing what they cannot do, and what they do not pretend to do? Am I to be ridiculed for not being a fiddler, when I am not allowed the free uſe of my fingers, and lay no claim to the honour of fiddling? Their inſtitutor's aim was not to make them learned, but to make them holy. They were to go beyond the line of ſtrict duty, and be living proofs to the people, that the approach to that line cannot be difficult. This, and not the cultivation of learning, was the firſt purpoſe of their inſtitution: and we muſt conſider, that if our friars were *all* addicted to ſtudy, they would in a great meaſure be diſqualified for thoſe mean but uſeful employments which they actually fill. A vaſt number of poets and philoſophers would not eaſily ſubmit to the drudgery of hearing the ſins of ſots, the complaints of the ſick, and the groans of the dying: nor would it be very eaſy to make them ſweep a church, or walk the ſtreets in proceſſion, and thus keep the populace in good humour, and

divert them from the many miſchiefs, which inevitably ariſe from ſuffering the minds of the common people to prey too much upon themſelves and to fall into a ſtate of melancholy and diſcontent. Theſe methods of keeping the multitude continually impreſſed with the ſenſe of religion dreſt out in a pleaſing form, is found by the experience of all times to be a wonderful conſolation to them under the miſeries incident to their condition.

But further, as to the learning of our friars, (without going one ſtep out of our way) do we not actually ſee what has been the ſucceſs of a large body of men, all forced by their inſtitution to ſtudy? Many of them, it is true, have been an honour to their ſociety and their country: but the majority, thro' a deſire perhaps of ſtriking new roads acroſs the vaſt regions of knowledge, have plunged unwarily into the whirlpools of error, and tumbled down the precipices of idle ſpeculation. The Jeſuits have puzzled themſelves with

ſubtile

ſubtile diſquiſitions, diſturbed the world with wild opinions and alarming tenets, and brought at laſt misfortune and diſgrace upon their whole brotherhood. Had they been in general as ignorant as the Capuchins and Minims, and attended more to practical than ſpeculative virtue, they had been as peaceful and as happy. Had they not been animated by that reſtleſs ambition which is almoſt inſeparable from men of ſuperiour parts and underſtanding, they had never been driven from their homes; never been toſſed about the Ocean and Mediterranean; never brought themſelves into the imminent danger of being utterly extirpated; and never ſeen many of their community periſh with mere diſtreſs upon their landing on an inhoſpitable ſhore.

However, let us not take it intirely for granted, that our friars are quite ſo ignorant as their enemies pretend. The greateſt part of them are tolerable Latiniſts, and not a ſmall number deeply ſkilled in Greek and in the Oriental lan-

guages. A ſufficient number likewiſe apply to caſuiſtry and ſchool-divinity, as I ſaid. They ſtudy the Bible carefully, the Fathers, Ariſtotle, and his Commentators: nor are they totally unacquainted with canon-law and eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. Not a few of them are good antiquarians, and many very converſant in the belles-lettres. They all learn muſic enough not to ſing diſſonantly, and the moſt ſkilful muſician we have at preſent is a friar *. And is all this to be called ignorance, perfect ignorance, ſhocking ignorance?

I know very well, that the chief ſtudies of our friars are in the preſent age very much out of faſhion, eſpecially amongſt thoſe who lay the greateſt claim to politeneſs. I know that many of the modern heroes of literature look down with contempt on acquiſitions like theirs, which yet have immortalized many names. But

* The learned father Martini at Bologna.

though

though the mode of life which our friars follow may render the poſſeſſion of thoſe requiſites that conſtitute a modern wit almoſt impoſſible to them; yet in my opinion many of the moſt famed works of the preſent writers will certainly never make any man ſo wiſe and ſo good, as the reading the moſt deſpiſed amongſt the Scholiaſts, and the moſt neglected amongſt the Fathers: and I cannot help thinking, that many of our friars ought to be looked upon with ſome degree of eſteem, though perhaps not with that veneration, which is beſtowed on your favourite Voltaires and your celebrated Rouſſeaus.

Of the general characteriſtics of our friars, many are laudable and many blamable. To their patience in miſery, their adherence to due ſubordination, their attachment to their religion, and their ready ſervices to the neceſſitous, none of their enemies has had generoſity enough to do juſtice. The proteſtants in general have found the friars always ready to encounter

them in the field of controverſy, and as able as themſelves to wield the weapons of truth and falſhood. Diſputers of all denominations ſoon grow hot, and proteſtants are as ſubject to iraſcibility as papiſts. They have therefore cried the friars down for near three centuries, and painted them as men quite devoid of all knowledge and of all goodneſs. But as they write at random, from prejudice and not from obſervation, not only all their good, but ſeveral of their bad qualities utterly eſcaped their ſagacity. There is one of the bad, which has not been often mentioned: I mean their general want of affection to their parents and families, and their perfect apathy with regard to thoſe friends they forſake when they forſake the world.

When a friar has reſided a while in his convent, he entertains ſuch an attachment to his order, that he loſes all tenderneſs to thoſe who are not hooded and habited like himſelf; forms no private friendſhip; has no regard for individuals; and cares

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for nothing but what is conducive to the advantage of his new companions. His endeavours tend now to extort from his family and friends even what he knows will diſtreſs them if granted; nor does he ever ceaſe to teaze them on the leaſt appearance of ſucceeding by importunity, even when his convent is far from being in any preſſing neceſſity.

This hateful habit of thinking a friar never renounces, not even on his death-bed. If he dies poſſeſſed of any thing, it never happens that he leaves it, or part of it, to his parents or relations when they happen to be needy. Every tittle is bequeathed to his convent; and blood has no more effect upon him than on the ſtupid brute. Were I to give my vote for the abolition of our religious orders, this want in them of natural affection would be my only inducement. And yet I am ſenſible that ſome apology may be offered for them, even on this particular. I know

that

that friars enter their convents before their affection to their families be rivetted by habit and reaſon. They are taught no other duties but thoſe of their new life, and inceſſantly recommended a total diſregard of whatever they left behind them when they turned their backs upon the world. Theſe ſolicitations, never diſcontinued, are nearly irreſiſtible; and I do not wonder at the effect they produce. We are Chriſtians, Jews, Mahometans, or idolaters from ſimilar cauſes; and it is but ſeldom that we can help being what we were imperceptibly made by early and repeated exhortations. But, though I may excuſe this offenſive inſenſibility of our friars, and pardon it as involuntary, yet it is impoſſible to be reconciled with any mode of life, when it ſtrongly tends to obliterate friendſhip and efface the very traces of that kindneſs, to which conſanguinity has an indiſputable plea.

However,

However, as there is no evil but what is productive of ſome good, it is chiefly to this apathic diſpoſition of our friars, that many remote regions owe whatever light they have of the goſpel. No corner of the earth is diſtant enough for their zeal; and whenever religion commands, every friar is ready at a minute's warning to ſet out for the arctic or the equinoxial continent. It is then that we ſee them all thoroughly inflamed with a deſire of ſpreading thoſe truths which they believe indiſpenſible to ſalvation. Deaf to all domeſtic endearment, thouſands of miſſionaries have patiently gone through the greateſt hardſhips, and intrepidly encountered the moſt imminent dangers for the advancement of Chriſtianity: nor are they few that have faced the cruelleſt death amongſt infidels and idolaters with a fortitude and reſignation quite unexampled amongſt men. And if this is not virtue, what it is that deſerves the name?

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Let me add one paragraph more on this fertile ſubject, and aſk my reader whether theſe men are worth knowing? Yet theſe men, ſo good and ſo bad, ſo wiſe and ſo fooliſh, ſo great and ſo little, inſtead of being attentively examined, are only derided and abuſed. Though they and their peculiarities afford the moſt curious ſubject for ſpeculation in human nature, yet not one in a hundred of the Engliſh travellers, when in Italy, or in other popiſh countries, ever ſhows the leaſt deſire of knowing the diſtinguiſhing marks of ſuch an odd and ſurpriſing ſet of mortals. Mr. Sharp himſelf, a man of curioſity, after having reſided for two months in a town where the friars are more numerous than in any other in Europe, has had nothing more to ſay of them but that they are ſuperſtitious and have fat guts. Alas, good Sir! you had done much better to mind nothing in Italy beyond your precious health, and you ought never to have mentioned

mentioned our friars if you had nothing elſe to ſay of them, but that that they have fat guts and are ſuperſtitious!

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

TO the above ſketch of the general character of our friars, I beg leave to add a few thoughts towards alleviating a little the heavy charge we lie under in all proteſtant countries, of being almoſt as great idolaters as the ancient Greek and Romans.

I have read with great pleaſure Middleton's famous *Letter from Rome*, as well as many other Engliſh works of that kind, and am perfectly convinced that *the conformity* (in many external practices) *between popery and paganiſm is very great:* but what does that conformity prove? Nothing elſe, in my opinion, but that the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity in Italy did not trouble themſelves about many heatheniſh cuſtoms, which they either conſidered as indifferent in themſelves, or

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as politically good: it proves that the eradication of ancient cuſtoms is ſo very difficult, that no change of religion can totally efface them, how long ſoever it may continue: And it proves, that men will imperceptibly add ſo many ornaments of their own to the primitive ſimplicity of any religion, as to render that ſimplicity ſcarcely diſcernable after a long revolution of centuries.

But there is no need of reading Middleton's letter, or any other ſuch ingenious and learned performance, in order to be convinced, that men have always had, and always will have, a certain ſet of ideas about religion, ſeemingly different, yet ſtill the ſame, and ſtill moving in unvaried rotation; for there is in all religions ſomething that is right, let them be ever ſo erroneous.

I will allow, that the proteſtants in general, and the Engliſh in particular, have purified the language and ſimplified their notions of Chriſtianity to a very great degree.

gree. But when they think or ſpeak of religion, are they able to conceive ideas and find words and phraſes intirely different from thoſe of the ancient Heathens, when they thought or ſpoke about religion? Two of the moſt predominant ideas in all religions are undoubtedly thoſe of *heaven* and *hell:* but when proteſtants think of *heaven*, are they able to keep their imaginations from running about a *celeſtial Eden?* This heatheniſh idea will be prevalent whatever they may do, as long as they ſhall be ſo charmed as they are with their gardens and fields, as the ancient Heathens were with theirs. And a proteſtant *hell* will likewiſe be ſomething reſembling a pagan *tartarus*, compoſed of everlaſting fire, as long as men ſuffer exquiſite pain by expoſing a finger to the rage of that element. Men, I repeat it, have a ſet of ideas in common, that will for ever circulate, let their reſpective religions be ever ſo different. A

proteſtant

proteſtant architect cannot build a St. Paul's or a St. Martin's upon any plan but thoſe pagan ones of Mercury and Diana; and a proteſtant poet cannot draw Satan and Moloch with any other pencils but thoſe uſed by the Heathens in painting Pluto and Enceladus. A biſhop muſt by all ſorts of Chriſtians be diſtinguiſhed from a common prieſt, either by a different dreſs, or by ſome other mark of ſuperiority, juſt as a pontiff of old was diſtinguiſhed by ſimilar means from a flamen. And how can we expreſs worſhip and thankſgiving in our churches, be they proteſtant or popiſh, but by ſolemn ſinging, by decent ſpeaking, by reverential ſilence, by kneeling, bowing, or proſtration, juſt as the Gentiles did in their temples when they intended thankſgiving and worſhip? Nay, is it poſſible for proteſtants or papiſts to ſpeak of the Almighty himſelf, without making uſe of the ſame heatheniſh ſubſtantives and adjectives uſed by the ancients when they ſpoke of their

Jupiter? I will not drive this reaſoning farther; but ſimply ſay, that it is impoſſible to eſcape a parallel between any two religions, be they ever ſo different, when a man of wit and learning will ſet about it. Several of the ceremonies now uſed in Italy are as probably borrowed from the Jews as from the Heathens; and many authors have cenſured the Jewiſh religion for its conformity with the Egyptian in many rites and ceremonies. It would not even be a very difficult taſk to find ſome conformity between the Hottentots and the Jews: for what do the Hottentots do when they cut off one of their genitals? They only commit a miſtake with regard to the proper place of circumciſion: and ſeveral authors have found ſtrong marks of conformity even between the Jews and the people of America in many of their religious rites. But religious rites ſignify very little to the ſubſtance of religion, though people, according to their ſeveral diſpoſitions and habits, may find the practice

tice or omiſſion of them more or leſs uſeful to ſtir up a ſenſe of religion: and it were well if Mr. Sharp, and thoſe other writers, who are ſo prodigious angry with every thing that they do not ſee practiſed at home, would imitate the moderation of the church of England, which in regulating this point for herſelf, has had too much ſenſe raſhly to condemn other churches. See the preface to her common prayer book, where it is ſaid, "*And in theſe our doings we condemn no other nations, nor preſcribe any thing but to our own people only, for we think it convenient that every country ſhould uſe ſuch ceremonies as they ſhall think beſt to the ſetting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of their people to a more perfect and godly living without error and ſuperſtition.*" What practices are but proper and decent in you, and what are improper and ſuperſtitious in us, is a point which hot and raſh men of either ſide are not very well qualified to deter-

mine. We burn incenſe in our churches, and you do not: but where is the great miſchief of perfuming a church with that ſweet odour, eſpecially in a country where a numerous meeting of people, all abundantly perſpiring, would make the place diſagreeable? We play upon fiddles and clarinets in our churches, and you play only upon the organ: but is there any greater ſanctity in an organ than in a clarinet or a fiddle? and is the air more holily ſhaken by the vibration of one ſound than of another? And how can ſome proteſtants be ſo unchriſtianly enthuſiaſtic, as to make uſe of the hard word *abominable*, when, for inſtance, we ſprinkle ourſelves and others with a few drops of water mixed with ſalt? Where is the abomination of this and other ſuch trifling cuſtoms? and what word would they uſe if, inſtead of ſprinkling, we were all the while flinging ſtones at each other's heads? Our votive offerings are at bottom nothing elſe but tokens of our gratitude

to heaven for having delivered us from evil; and I ſee nothing amiſs in this practice, although it has been uſed by Heathens. And, if we have frequent proceſſions on holidays, a proceſſion has nothing ſacrilegious in it, nor does it appear to be a ſuperſtition of a very noxious quality: and if we have them, and you not, it is becauſe our climate, leſs inconſtant than yours, enables us to keep our people as harmleſsly occupied on thoſe days, as the Roman heathens did theirs. There is nothing with which Mr. Sharp ſeems ſo much affected as with theſe religious ceremonies. They offend him, they ſhock him, they ſtir his indignation up to the higheſt pitch; and he holds our *ridiculous geſtures and whimſical tricks*, as well as our *proud prieſts* in the greateſt deteſtation: and yet while he was in Italy, as he tells us, he could never keep away from our churches, though he fretted to ſee *young men walking in a right line, dreſſed in red banians and white nightrails:* but why

is he not ſhocked to ſee young men with buſhy wigs, with black nightgowns, and white ſurplices over them, walking in a crooked line? Is is that the colour of red provokes him, as it does bulls and turkey-cocks? And why ſhould our bowings and kneelings, ſittings and riſings, praying ſometimes with a low and ſometimes with a loud voice, inſpire him with ſuch an uncommon rage, more than the ſimilar practices which are uſed in his own church? There are people in theſe kingdoms who blame with equal fury many of thoſe religious ceremonies that are uſed by the church of England; and juſt with as much reaſon as Mr. Sharp does thoſe uſed by the church of Rome.

But what ſignifies anſwering a multitude of ſuch ridiculous accuſations, always delivered in a moſt irreligious ſtile? There is no great need to give reaſons for a thouſand ceremonies, which though in themſelves ſometimes childiſh and inſignificant, and even derived from heatheniſm, are

are yet in general either uſeful or harmleſs. All this, one way or other, is mere matter of fancy, and no way affecting the ſubſtance of religion, or the practice of virtue. And will any body ſay, that it is poſſible to render Chriſtianity perfectly uniform every where? I think it is not, whatever enthuſiaſts may dream. Suppoſe, for inſtance, the Hernhutters were to ſucceed in their preſent ſcheme of converting the Greenlanders, and make them embrace the goſpel; and when this work is effected, ſuppoſe the Greenlanders intirely cut off from all intercourſe with Europe: would it not then be eaſy, eſpecially for ſuch deep critics as Mr. Sharp, to find as much fault with their ſcantineſs of Chriſtian practices, as with the ſuperabundance of ours? And would not their Chriſtian practices in ſuch a caſe be very ſcanty? They certainly would, if we reflect that they could not even be able to find bread and wine for the euchariſtic table. There is no need of enlarging upon this

hint, and of proving that it would be abſolutely impoſſible for many nations to be Chriſtians either after the Engliſh or the Italian manner.

But I hear Mr. Sharp repeat in a very grave tone, that this is not the great point in queſtion between proteſtants and papiſts. The great point is, that the papiſts have full twenty meaſures of the heatheniſh religion with the twenty they have of Chriſtianity; and that this is a ſhocking mixture. However, let me aſk him what reaſon proteſtants have to boaſt ſo much of ſuperior purity, when with their twenty meaſures of Chriſtianity they have five of paganiſm likewiſe? What matters the more or the leſs when religion is in the caſe? They might as well boaſt, that their faces are leſs black than ours, becauſe they waſhed them in ink fifteen times leſs than we. Our proceſſions, votive offerings, burning of incenſe, lighting lamps and candles, uſing holy water, and other ſuch practices, aſſiſt our devotion undoubtedly,

undoubtedly; as the playing upon an organ does that of an Engliſh congregation; nor could any prejudice ariſe from them either to body or ſoul, were they adopted by the whole world. They neither impair health, nor ſhorten life; and will neither ſhut the gates of heaven, nor open thoſe of hell. And do they influence manners for the worſe? Do they make us leſs good than the Engliſh, Dutch, Danes, or Swedes? This effect they have not, if we may credit thoſe very men who are ſo earneſt in crying them down. Middleton ſays, that "*of all the places he has ever* "*ſeen, or ever ſhall ſee,* (mark the energy "of his words) *Rome is by far the moſt* "*delightful, becauſe travellers there find* "*themſelves acommodated with all the con-* "*veniencies of life in an eaſy manner; be-* "*cauſe of the general civility and reſpect* "*ſhown to ſtrangers, and becauſe there* "*every man of prudence is ſure to find* "*quiet and ſecurity.*" Biſhop Burnet, another tremendous enemy to our ſuperſtitious

ſtitious practices, honeſty confeſſes, that "*after all the liberty he had taken in writ-*
"*ing his thoughts freely both of the church*
"*and ſee of Rome, and was known by all*
"*with whom he converſed there,* (known
"to be no friend to our religion) *yet met*
"*with the higheſt civilities poſſible amongſt*
"*all ſorts of people.*" Miſſon, the ſcurrilous Miſſon, who had the impudence to affirm, that our "*prieſts and friars are*
"*commonly horrible debauchees,*" and that
"*it is impoſſible to fancy any exceſs, of which*
"*they are not guilty,*" the deſpicable Miſſon himſelf, in ſpight of his low malice to us, is compelled by truth to confeſs, that "*the moſt bigotted Italians ſhow no*
"*hatred or averſion to thoſe they call here-*
"*tics, and their low people only ſay they are*
"*not Chriſtians when they hear them ridi-*
"*cule their Madona's.*" It is needleſs to quote other proteſtants to prove, that our mode of religion has no tendency to make us worſe than other people in point of morals and manners. I will only obſerve again,

again, that your briſk lords and wild ſquires, who ramble about our country, are admitted with pleaſure to our diverſions and our tables, are treated by us as companions and friends, and make even love to our ladies whenever they pleaſe, without the leaſt hindrance from difference of religion: nay our learned friars themſelves treat your divines with the greateſt deference and affection whenever they ſee them in Italy: and who can prove that this our kindneſs, open-heartedneſs, and civility may not poſſibly be the reſult of our peculiar ſuperſtition? Our modes of religion force our eyes on beautiful mothers tenderly embracing their children, and on ſaints and angels melting with devotion; and thus contribute to render us affectionate and gentle. Theſe modes accuſtom our voices to expreſs melodious ſounds; and thus aſſiſt in harmonizing our ſouls. Theſe modes rejoice our minds with pleaſing ſhows, and frequently diſpel the clouds

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of ſadneſs and ill-humour; and thus the habit of being inwardly chearful makes us pleaſed with ſtrangers as well as with ourſelves. Such general advantages procured to us by our mode of religion, will eſcape the obſervation of the connoiſſeurs in Chriſtianity, and their ſagacity will never extend farther than the *ſtriking conformity between popery and paganiſm*. But were they obliged to aſſign a cauſe for our infinite kindneſs to one another, and extreme urbanity to ſtrangers of all nations and communities, they might poſſibly find that cauſe no where but in our ſuperſtitious modes of religion, perhaps better calculated than any other extant for the general advantage of humanity.

However, ſuppoſe us for a moment willing to comply with the deſire of your Middletons and your Burnets, of your Miſſons and your Sharps, and ready to reform a good number of our ſuperſtitious practices and ceremonies, how could we do it without raiſing great diſturbances

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in our land? how could we do it without incurring the danger of falling out among ourſelves, as your forefathers did when through zeal or policy they undertook a reformation? Shall we burn down each other's houſes, becauſe a part of us has taken an averſion to the pictures and moſaics of St. Peter, and the gold and jewels of Loretto? Shall we cut each other's throats becauſe not permitted to melt a virgin's image into candles to light us at quadrille? Shall we venture to ſee our provinces overrun with military deſperado's, that people may be kept from fooliſhly recommending their eyes to St. Lucia, or their teeth to St. Apollonia? Shall we open doors and gates for Leſdiguieres and Bouillons, for Cromwells and Iretons, to ruſh forth, horribly clad in religion, and deprive numberleſs wives of huſbands, and numberleſs children of fathers?

But ſuppoſe ſtill, that all this fermentation cauſed by novelty is over, at the ſmall expence of ſome millions of lives, and that

we

we are at laſt full as reformed as you are: ſuppoſe we are laughing as well as you at St. Francis for his croſſing the ſea upon his cloak, and at St. Anthony for his preaching ſermons to the fiſhes, what will be the conſequence? Shall we really be the better for it? To convince us that we really ſhall, you muſt firſt convince us that the modern Engliſh, the modern Dutch, the modern proteſtants of all denominations, who believe theſe things no longer, are really better than their anceſtors, who formerly believed them as well as we. Prove that if you can: prove that you are more tender-hearted, more hoſpitable, more magnanimous, better in fine in every reſpect than your forefathers of four hundred years ago: prove that your vices are as much diminiſhed as your virtues are encreaſed; and we will conquer our averſion and dread of reformation; run the hazard of any calamity in order to bring proteſtantiſm about; and be juſt as true and good

Chriſtians

Chriſtians as you who rail ſo much at our preſent ſuperſtition. But as long as we ſee no other means of reforming, except thoſe that your hiſtory affords, and as long as your country abounds with ſnarlers, debauchees, drunkards, thieves, and other ſuch people full as much as ours, if not more, God forbid we ſhould ever think of innovations in religion. Let a thouſand Middletons and Burnets, Miſſons and Sharps, diſplay for ever their wit and their erudition to our prejudice, and blame us for things we cannot help, except we throw our whole country into convulſions; ſtill let us continue to be as ſuperſtitious, and even idolatrous (if they will have it ſo) like the ancient Greeks and Romans, if there is no other remedy but this for the evil. There will never be any great harm in our heatheniſh practices, provided we continue (as I hope we always ſhall) to be peaceful amongſt ourſelves, and kind to ſtrangers, even when we know for certain they are none of our

friends. Let miniſters and prieſts, paſtors and friars, vent their ſpleen bitter in declamations againſt each other's tenets and opinions, and laugh at one becauſe he kneels like a heathen to a picture; and at another, becauſe he has a Mahometan abhorrence for it; my wiſh ſhall never go farther, than that hot-headed zealots may ceaſe to ſcoff at each other, and abſtain from unchriſtian as well as from unmannerly invectives: that both Engliſh and Italians, Spaniſh and Dutch, Pariſians and Geneveſe, and in fine Turks, Jews, and Chriſtians may be civil and humane to each other whenever chance ſhall bring them together, and whenever they ſhall ſtand in need of each other's benevolence and bounty.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

AMONGST the general characteriſtics of the Italians, no travel-writer has ever been ſo ſagacious or ſo generous as to obſerve that charity is one of the moſt conſpicuous; that charity which is chriſtianly termed *univerſal love and liberality to the neceſſitous*.

To be convinced that I do not attribute this glorious characteriſtic to my countrymen out of a blind partiality, the reader needs only be appriſed, that no country whatſoever abounds ſo much in hoſpitals as Italy. Let any ſtranger ſurvey it from the moſt alpine limits of Piedmont to the remoteſt end of Calabria, he will ſcarcely find a town that does not exhibit ſome undeniable proofs of what I advance.

An exact detail of the Italian hoſpitals, together with an accurate account of their

revenues, and an enumeration of the many objects which find relief in them, would prove more tedious than intereſting, were it in my power to give it. However, that the reader may form ſome idea of the effect produced by the ſpirit of charity which prevails amongſt us, it will be ſufficient to ſay, that Miſſon and Keyſler have both reckoned twenty-two hoſpitals in the ſingle town of Florence; one of which *(L'Annunciata)* maintains three thouſand foundlings, and another *(Santa Maria Nuova)* ſeven hundred ſick. Keyſler has likewiſe mentioned one of the many at Genoa, which contains two thouſand poor objects, and has employed ſome pages in deſcribing one at Milan, which ſupports fifteen hundred ſick, three thouſand idiots and lunatics, and about five thouſand foundlings: and biſhop Burnet has taken notice of one at Naples, whoſe income amounts to ſomething more than eighty thouſand pounds ſterling, and

maintains

maintains ſtill larger numbers than that at Milan.

Were theſe the only monuments of our charity, they would in my humble opinion give us a juſt claim to the honour of being as humane as any other Chriſtian nation: and as our hoſpitals were chiefly erected and endowed by private and popular contributions rather than by princely munificence, they muſt certainly obviate that character of ſavageneſs, which travelling ſlanderers have obliquely caſt upon us, when they have painted us as naturally inclined to cruelty and bloodſhed. But many more than theſe are the proofs which I could bring of our natural kindneſs to the diſtreſſed, if I were not afraid of prolixity. Not to enter, as I ſaid, into a tedious account of our hoſpitals, let me only add, that there are only few amongſt my readers, who have not heard of the four chief ones at Venice; as their large funds, together with the ſingularity of their muſical inſtitutions, have attracted

the attention of every ſtranger that has viſited that town for theſe many years.

But it is really ſurpriſing to hear theſe travelling ſlanderers perpetually reviling our imperial Rome, and deſcribing it as a ſeat of iniquity and corruption, when there is no ſort of infirmity, no imaginable ſpecies of wretchedneſs but what may find relief in one or other of its numerous hoſpitals.

The benevolence of the modern Romans muſt have been very great, and have continued through many generations, ſince it is aſſerted with a confidence ſupported by many evident calculations, that the united revenues of all the cardinals reſiding in Italy, which upon a medium may be reckoned at four thouſand pounds each, do not amount to the third part of the revenues poſſeſſed by the hoſpitals in that ſingle city: a city, which for time immemorial has conſtantly been diſtinguiſhable above any that can poſſibly be named for ſome ſtriking particularity. And yet the

characteriſtic charity of the modern Romans, as well as that of all other Italians, has never found a ſingle itinerant panegyriſt. Keyſler only, of the many travel-writers I have read, has deigned to obſerve, that "*Proteſtant countries cannot* "*be compared to thoſe where the Romiſh* "*religion is profeſſed with regard to hoſpi-*"*tals, lazzaretto's, and other charitable* "*foundations.*" But as it is the conſtant rule of proteſtants, never to beſtow any praiſe upon papiſts without ſome mixture of cenſure, the honeſt German has been pleaſed to add, with an aukward ſneer, that "*the dread of purgatory is not the* "*leaſt of our incitements to charities of this* "*kind.*" But why the dread of purgatory rather than that of hell, which might in all probability prove ſtill more forcible? Yet, allowing Keyſler's remark to be juſt, I do not ſee how our dread of purgatory can be a proper ſubject for ridicule, when it is granted that it prompts us to acts of

humanity, and is productive of ſuch laudable and truly Chriſtian effects. Sophiſtical theologians may wrangle for ever, and I may eaſily be perſuaded that the exiſtence of purgatory is not ſo certain as that of London or Conſtantinople: but ſurely we muſt conſider thoſe as no very bad tenets of religion that help humanity moſt, and have the power of inducing the opulent to ſhare their temporal bleſſings with the poor.

Nor is the admittance into our hoſpitals rendered difficult by caviling or narrow regulations, as is often the caſe in other countries, where charity is ſo diligently anatomiſed, that many good things are not done, for fear improper objects ſhould partake of them. The Italians ſcorn ſuch paultry diſcriminations, and every perſon who is, or will be, an object of their charity, is by them conſidered as poor enough to deſerve a ſhare of it. Therefore in the greateſt part of our hoſpitals every object of miſery is freely received; nor

nor is there any enquiry ever made whether it is in his power to procure proper aſſiſtance at home: nor is any particular licence or certificate required from a governor, a ſubſcriber, a pariſh-prieſt, or any ſuch perſon, as is practiſed in other countries. The gates of ſuch places, like the gates of heaven, are opened wide to the diſtreſſed man, to the helpleſs babe or orphan, to the repenting proſtitute, to every creature that knocks, whenever there is room; and when there is none, which happens but ſeldom, the poor are aſſiſted from the hoſpital wherever they are, and attended on the leaſt notice by its phyſicians, ſurgeons, and apothecaries.

With regard to the foundlings, thoſe that carry them to the proper hoſpitals, put them in an engine at the door, ring a bell to give notice that a child has been brought, and go about their buſineſs; and the poor infant is immediately taken care of; nor is there any enquiry ever made

their parents: ſo that, thoſe who cannot maintain their children, as well as thoſe who will not, may ſend them there without the leaſt hindrance; certain that the public charity will ſupply their want of ability and tenderneſs.

And here let me ſay, that theſe are the children, who, every where in Italy, and in Venice eſpecially, *are conſidered as the children of the ſtate*; and not all children indifferently, as Mr. Sharp has abſurdly remarked of the Venetians. Nor is this an improper place to obſerve that our numerous foundling-hoſpitals are one of the many cauſes, that Italy is upon the whole much more populous than any other country of equal extent in Europe, becauſe our poor need not be afraid of marrying, as their offspring, at the very worſt, will always be maintained whenever ſent to ſuch places: and as a mark is generally put upon foundlings when they are ſent to an hoſpital, any parent may eaſily have his child returned to him, whenever his

circumſtances will permit his tenderneſs to operate, and take him home.

Nor are our hoſpitals ſolely deſtined to the natives. No ſuch narrow way of thinking prevails amongſt us. A ſtranger gets admittance into any of them when there is room, or is aſſiſted at home quite as liberally as if he were a native, whatever his country or his religion may be, excepting only Jews; as their communities, wherever they are ſuffered, are obliged by our laws to take care of their poor and ſick, whether natives or ſtrangers. Yet this is no hardſhip on them, becauſe they never voluntarily mix with the *Gohims*, as they call us, and ſuperſtitiouſly abhor all food that is not dreſſed by cooks of their own perſuaſion. But when a proteſtant or a Turk is admitted to one of our hoſpitals, no ſort of moleſtation is given him on account of his creed: on the contrary, a drawn curtain hinders him from being an involuntary ſpectator of any of our acts of religion within the

reach

reach of his ſight, that his prejudices may not be hurt; as Keyſler had occaſion to obſerve in the great hoſpital at Milan, and as he might have obſerved in many others in other parts.

At Venice many of the neceſſitous go to ſeek relief in its hoſpitals from the neighbouring parts of Germany; and almoſt every week foundlings are brought there from the free-port of Trieſte. Nor does the Venetian government think this importation grievous to their ſtate; but receives them indiſtinctly: and at Rome there are ſeveral hoſpitals ſolely deſtined to ſtrangers, each overſeen and attended by people that underſtand their reſpective languages. The French, Spaniards, and Germans, as well as ſome Italians not ſubject to the pope, have an hoſpital each, where they can reſpectively meet with ſtill greater conveniencies than in thoſe where every body is received indiſcriminately. Let London, Paris, or any other proud

metropolis

metropolis in Europe boaſt of any ſuch eſtabliſhment if they can.

But Italian charity is ſtill of a more extenſive nature, and embraces other objects, beſides thoſe that are only fit for hoſpitals. Many are the funds, and ſome of them very conſiderable, whoſe produce is yearly ſhared into competent ſums, and diſtributed under the name of portions to poor maidens when they are willing to marry, or deſirous to take the veil.

Many proteſtants, who have been informed of this ſpecies of charity, which is pretty general amongſt us, have ridiculed us moſt unmercifully for allowing portions to thoſe females who reſolve to ſeclude themſelves for ever from the world: and the witty Mr. Sharp, ſeeing the pope diſtribute *two hundred and thirty portions to as many maidens, the greater part of whom were to get huſbands if they could, and the remainder to dedicate themſelves to a monaſtic life*, inſtead of ſuffering his good-nature to operate and giving due praiſe to

ſo

ſo noble a diſtribution, has ſcurrilouſly termed it *a trick*, becauſe it was accompanied by *his holineſs' benediction*. A very vile trick indeed! But trick or no trick, does Mr. Sharp think it poſſible for all females in Rome, or elſewhere, to provide themſelves with lawful mates? He would be ridiculous if he was to anſwer me in the affirmative, becauſe the contrary may eaſily be obſerved in any country, and eſpecially in his own, as I have already had occaſion to remark. Why then ſhould we be ſo narrow-minded, or rather ſo hard-hearted, as to deny our charity to thoſe poor girls, who have no bridegrooms ready to take them to the altar whenever a little ſum is ready to begin houſekeeping? Why are we not to help thoſe, who, either through a miſtaken piety or impoſſibility of marrying, reſolve to end their days in celibacy, rather within than without the walls of a monaſtery? But we give a double portion to thoſe who turn nuns, and this, in Mr. Sharp's opinion,

opinion, is an unpardonable abſurdity. Why, Sir? Twenty or thirty crowns will eaſily provide a poor maiden a huſband; but twenty or thirty crowns are not ſufficient to defray the expence, if ſhe has a mind to turn nun. Why therefore ſhould ſhe not be enabled by a larger ſum to devote herſelf to that way of life which ſhe prefers to any other? Does Mr. Sharp think, that a double portion is an incitement to induce our poor girls to turn nuns rather than marry, ſuppoſing both in their option? If he really thinks ſo, I muſt adviſe him to ſtudy nature over again, and under ſome female preceptor too.

Beſides the funds thus applied in many parts of Italy to the marrying of poor maidens, or placing them in nunneries, we have ſome others in many places of a kind no leſs charitable. I mean thoſe, that have been inſtituted to prevent the extortions of uſurers, by which the diſtreſſes of the poor are extremely aggravated in other countries. From theſe

funds

ſands the poor generally receive two thirds of the value of their pledges without paying any intereſt for ſmall ſums, and only one or two per cent. for ſums conſiderable. Such ſums they may keep in their hands for eighteen months, and then return to take their goods out of pawn. But ſhould they forfeit them, they are ſold by auction, and the ſurplus paid them. Why do not all Chriſtian nations adopt this Italian ſcheme of relieving their poor, ever ſubject to the rapacious extortions of hard-hearted Jews or mercileſs pawnbrokers?

I need not mention here that other kind of charity ſo common amongſt the Italians, of giving alms to ſtreet-beggars. This great fault of ours is generally known, thanks to thoſe ultramontane politicians who have ſo often blamed us for it in their wiſe accounts of our country, pretending that this practice of ours encourages idleneſs, and of courſe deſtroys induſtry.

To

To this heavy charge I have nothing to anſwer, but that I hope my countrymen will never adopt ſuch outlandiſh politics. A virtuous habit will ſcarcely be kept up, but by a frequent repetition of virtuous acts, let them be ever ſo ſmall: and were we to philoſophiſe thus deeply, and endeavour ſubtilly to diſtinguiſh between the proper and improper objects of our benevolence, I am afraid that too many of us would ſoon be in danger of loſing the habit of being charitable at all. I will allow that many of our ſtreet-beggars do not deſerve alms, and that many of them are mere idlers, who could fall upon better ways of living than that of collecting a precarious ſubſiſtence in our ſtreets. Yet no body was ever ruined, I think, by giving farthings and half-pence to ſtreet-beggars, and no nation was ever diſtreſſed by this kind of charity.* Therefore I cannot heartily join with thoſe who would be for denying all ſort of compaſſion to

ſuch

ſuch poor wretches, whoſe mental faculties are ſo contracted or ſo depraved, as to be incapable of chuſing leſs uncertain and leſs miſerable means of ſubſiſtence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

AFTER what I have ſaid in general of the Italians, I ought to take notice of thoſe peculiarities of character which remarkably diſtinguiſh the people of one Italian diſtrict from that of another.

Superficial travellers are apt to ſpeak of them in the maſs; and they cannot fall into a greater miſtake. There is very little difference, comparatively ſpeaking, between the ſeveral provinces of England, becauſe all their inhabitants live under the ſame laws, ſpeak dialects of the ſame tongue much nearer each other than the dialects of Italy, and have a much greater intercourſe between themſelves than the Italians have had theſe many ages. No nations, diſtinguiſhed by different names, vary more from each other in almoſt every reſpect than thoſe which go under the common name of Italians: but ſtill theſe

provincial diſcriminations require a very maſterly hand in the deſcription; and I am ſure I feel my abitities to be very diſproportionate to the taſk. It would not be eaſy for a connoiſſeur in painting to make a by-ſtander comprehend the nice varieties in each particular ſtyle of our capital painters by the mere force of verbal deſcription. Different cuſtoms and manners, as well as different tints and colours, border ſo much upon each other, that many of them have ſcarcely any proper name, though they may be properly diſcriminated by the eye, and by the judgement of the accurate obſerver of both. It is therefore as eaſy to ſay, that the Engliſh are good-natured, the Scotch ſelfiſh, the French fickle, the Spaniards grave, the Germans heavy, and the Swiſs uncouth, as that Raphael's ſtyle is grand, Michelangelo's robuſt, Correggio's graceful, Carracci's bold, Titian's full of truth, and ſo forth. But what clear notions do ſuch epitomizing epithets convey to the mind

mind of thoſe who wiſh to know ſomething poſitive about the ſtyles of painters and the characters of nations?

However, that I may not leave ſo ample a topic quite untouched, I will here endeavour to give my reader what ſatisfaction I can upon the ſeveral characteriſtics of the Italians.

CHAP. XXIII.

TO begin therefore with the Piedmonteſe, who are the moſt alpine nation of Italy, I muſt obſerve, that one of the chief qualities which diſtinguiſh them from all other Italians, is their want of chearfulneſs. A ſtranger travelling through Italy may eaſily obſerve, that all the nations there have in general very gay countenances, and viſibly appear much inclined to jollity by their frequent and obſtreperous laughing. But take a walk along any place of public reſort in any of the Piedmonteſe towns, and you will preſently perceive that almoſt every face looks cloudy and full of ſullen gravity.

There are many peculiarities beſides this, that render the Piedmonteſe unlike the other Italians. Among other things, it is very remarkable, that Piedmont never produced

produced a ſingle poet, as far as the records of the country can go: whereas there is no province of Italy but what can boaſt of ſome poet, ancient or modern. Nay, the inhabitants of ſeveral Italian provinces have in general ſo briſk a vein of poetry running through them, that a great many of the people can even ſing verſes extempore; and ſome of them do it in ſuch a manner, that I have often been amazed at the readineſs of their expreſſions. The Piedmonteſe have no ſuch knack, and are even inſenſible to the beauties of thoſe Orlando's and Goffredo's, which will inſtantly warm a Roman, a Tuſcan, a Venetian, and a Neapolitan. And yet the Piedmonteſe are not deficient in ſeveral branches of learning, and ſome of them have ſucceeded tolerably well in civil law, phyſic, and the mathematics.

It is likewiſe obſervable of theſe people, that none of them ever attained to any degree of excellence in the polite arts: and it is but lately that they can boaſt of

(Cavaliero Bomonte) a ſtatuary, *(Signor Ladetto)* and ſome architects *(Conte Alfieri, Signor Borra,* and others) who yet, to ſay the truth, are far inferiour to numberleſs artiſts produced by all other provinces of Italy.

But if the Piedmonteſe are not to be compared with the Tuſcans and other Italians for that brilliancy of imagination which poetry and the polite arts require, they have, on the other hand, greatly the advantage when conſidered as ſoldiers. Though their troops have never been very numerous, every body converſant in hiſtory knows the brave ſtand they have made for ſome centuries paſt againſt the French, Spaniards, and Germans whenever they were invaded by theſe nations. It is true that they have been frequently overpowered by more numerous forces: they have ſo conſtantly and quickly recovered after every defeat, that the French in particular have had reaſon enough for their proverbial ſaying, that " *Le Piémont*

" *eſt*

" eſt la ſepulture des Francois," Piedmont is the burying-place of the French.

Such is the martial ſpirit in Piedmont, that even the groſſeſt peaſants are ambitious of appearing in a military character: and it is ſo uſual a ſight to ſee them follow the plow in the caſt-off cloaths of the ſoldiery, that a ſtranger, unacquainted with their cuſtom of buying up thoſe cloaths for uſe, would be apt to think Piedmont abounded in ſoldiers even more than the king of Pruſſia's dominions.

The ſkill of the Piedmonteſe in fortification is alſo very great; and their *Bertola's* and *Pinto's* have ſhown as much genius as the *Vaubans* and *Cohorns* in rendering impregnable ſeveral places, which inferiour engineers would only have made ſtrong. The French have many times hovered about La Brunette, Feneſtrelles, and Exilles; but they never dared to beſiege them: and when Cuneo, Demont, Alexandria, and ſome other of their fortreſſes are quite finiſhed, it will in all

probability prove next to impoſſible for the French armies ever to penetrate into Italy without a previous leave from the Piedmonteſe.

The nobility of Piedmont, which are very numerous, conſidering the extent of the country, affect much the French manners, as well as the French language: and yet they are far from reſembling their architypes, wanting much of that affability, eaſy elegance, and alertneſs, for which the French nobility are ſo remarkable. The Turineſe nobles are in general very proud of their deſcent, and moſt of them diſdain all familiar intercourſe with any of thoſe among their fellow-ſubjects whom they think a degree below themſelves: or if they condeſcend to ſpeak to them, and admit them to ſome kind of familiarity, their condeſcenſion is ſuch an odd mixture of urbanity and haughtineſs, that proves very diſguſtful to men of any parts and ſpirit. Many amongſt that nobility have obtained the reputation of good

politicians and ſkilful negotiators of public affairs: but they are upon the whole ſo much bent to war, and ſo averſe to all ſort of ſcientifical acquiſitions, that very few of them know the Italian language, fewer ſtill the Latin, and I never heard of any who could read the Greek alphabet.

Nor is the ſecond rank in Piedmont much more eager than the firſt after academical knowledge. No nation of Italy has ſo many individuals of the ſecond rank ſo ignorant as the Piedmonteſe. Some of them, as I ſaid, have been good phyſicians, lawyers, and mathematicians: but in general they are not inclined to ſtudy. At leaſt I never found it very entertaining to enter their *converſazione's*, their coffee-houſes, and other places of public reſort, and liſten to their common talk, which is too often frivolous and inſipid. And they are withal ſo punctilious and ſo ready to draw the ſword, that more duels are fought

fought in Piedmont than in all the reſt of Italy taken together.

Both the firſt and ſecond rank of women amongſt them are likewiſe very ignorant. A few French romances form the libraries of thoſe that can read: and it is not in Piedmont that one muſt expect to be rationally entertained in the ſociety of the fair. A few of them plunge into groſs vice; but the greateſt part into ſtupid bigotry, even when ſtill young and handſome; and very few are thoſe, who know how to keep alike diſtant from theſe two extremes, and find means at the ſame time to be agreeable company.

The artiſans and peaſantry of Piedmont are the beſt part of that nation. Scarcely the Tuſcans and the Genoeſe can cope with them for induſtry and ſkill in manufactures and huſbandry. Their manufactures are daily riſing, to the no ſmall prejudice of their neighbours the French; and few countries in Europe are made ſo beautiful

beautiful as theirs by cultivation, the beſt Engliſh provinces not excepted.

To finiſh the picture of the Piedmonteſe, they are great admires of the French, hate the Genoeſe, deſpiſe all other Italians, and are not beloved by any body, though they are far from being wanting in hoſpitality after their own manner to all ſorts of ſtrangers, and even to thoſe whom they hate and deſpiſe.

I need not enlarge on the character of the Monferrine, Savoyards, and other ſubjects of his Sardinian majeſty, becauſe they do not differ much from the Piedmonteſe. The inhabitants of Savoy only, are diſtinguiſhable from their other fellow-ſubjects by their greater plainneſs of manners and ſuperior ſkill in thriftineſs: both which qualities in them are the natural effects of the barrenneſs of their mountains.

Mr. Sharp has expatiated pretty largely on the ciciſbeo's and murderers of Italy. But his affirmations on theſe two heads, which

which are undoubtedly moſt calumnious when applied to the Italians in general, (as he has done) prove ſtill more ſo when applied to the Piedmonteſe in particular. Neither of the two characteriſtics belong in the leaſt to this nation, as the men and women throughout the country are perfect ſtrangers to the refined notions of Platonic love, and mix in mutual intercourſe exactly after the manner of the French and Engliſh; and the Piedmonteſe weapon in deciding ſudden quarrels is the ſword, as I ſaid, and not the dagger.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

SOUTH of Piedmont, and along-ſhore of the Tyrrhene ſea, lie the ſmall, but populous dominions of the Genoeſe republic.

The people of this country have been much expoſed in ancient days to the malignity of wit, and many of the Roman poets have taken much freedom with the ancient Ligurians. Yet, whatever truth there may be in the ſarcaſtic ſayings of Virgil, Silius Italicus, Auſonius, and others, I think that a proud oſtentation of learning rather than ſober reaſon has induced many a modern to tread in their footſteps. As a native of Turin, I could not help being brought up in an unjuſt averſion to the Genoeſe: an averſion very common among neighbouring nations, and very difficult for human reaſon to conquer

conquer at any time of life. But having had occaſion, twice in my days, and at diſtant periods, to paſs ſome months at Genoa, and to viſit the greateſt part of the republic's territories, I own I could not find in that people any ground for the inſolent reproach, that *their men are as devoid of faith, and their women of ſhame, as their hills are of wood, and their ſea of fiſhes* *.

It is true that the Tyrrhene ſea does not greatly abound in fiſh, and the rocky tops of the Ligurian mountains are not much ſhaded by firs and oaks. But integrity in men, and modeſty in women are quite as common throughout the Genoeſe country as any where elſe. No country was ever wanting in ſpecious ſlanderers: but before we credit a few ſayings againſt the ancient Ligurians, or the modern

* De Genua quid ais? Montes, mare, fœmina, virque
Sunt ſine arboribus, piſce, pudore, fide.

Genoeſe,

Genoeſe, let us conſider what degree of belief will be due from poſterity to the preſent poets of England and France when they characteriſe each other. For my part, inſtead of perſiſting in my early ridiculous antipathy to the Genoeſe, I have often ſaid, that, were it in my power to collect in any particular place all the friends I have ſcattered in many, I would certainly rather chuſe to live with them at Genoa than in any other town I ever ſaw; becauſe there the government is mild, the climate ſoft, the habitations large and clean, and the whole face of the country moſt romantically beautiful.

The Genoeſe nobles are in general affable, polite, and very knowing: and their great ladies much better acquainted with books than any other ſet of Italian ladies. They all pique themſelves upon ſpeaking Italian and French with great correctneſs; and men may converſe in their hearing upon the belles-lettres, and even upon trade and politics, without any breach

breach of civility; which would not be the caſe in almoſt all other parts of Italy; where common converſation is generally not very intereſting when the fair are preſent.

With regard to the low people, the Genoeſe are the moſt laborious and induſtrious that ever fell under my obſervation. Nor are they wanting in bravery; as the Germans have experienced to their coſt in the laſt Italian war, when that army of theirs which had defeated forty or fifty thouſand French at Piacenza, was by the Genoeſe populace impetuouſly attacked, routed, and put to a moſt ignominious flight.

Trade in Genoa is far from being derogatory to nobility, as I have already obſerved: ſo that even the chief ſenators and members of government engage in it publicly, and in their own names. The Piedmonteſe differ ſo much from them in this particular, that no man profeſſing commerce,

commerce, except a banker, is allowed in Piedmont to wear a ſword.

I cannot help taking notice here, that the Genoeſe have the misfortune of reckoning amongſt their enemies many of the Engliſh nation; namely a very large number of thoſe deſpicable wretches who go in this kingdom under the appellation of the Grub-ſtreet writers.

Theſe tremendous myrmidons are perpetually venting their formidable rage in your news-papers againſt the Genoeſe for two powerful reaſons. The one is, that thoſe republicans appear unwilling to loſe Corſica tamely; and ſuch an unwillingneſs in them is not reconcileable with the Grub-ſtreet notions of liberty and property. The other is, that the Genoeſe are ſo very wicked as to permit their artificers to build ſhips of war, and ſell them to the French and Spaniards.

As to the firſt of theſe two points I have little to ſay, becauſe little I think is neceſſary to be ſaid. No ſovereign country

is willing to ſuffer the independency of its provinces, and England as little as any other: beſides my preſent buſineſs is not to launch into a nice diſcuſſion of the political intereſts of the Italian ſovereigns, but only to ſpeak of the Italian manners and cuſtoms. But as to the ſecond point, it is not a little ſurpriſing to hear the Genoeſe ſo often abuſed for doing what they have an indiſputable right to do? Ship-building is a manufacture at Genoa, as much as making ſtuff at Norwich: and what foreign nation has any right to hinder the manufacturers of either town from ſelling the products of their labour and ingenuity? When powder and ball are ſold to the pirates of Algiers and Tunis, one would think that ſhips might alſo be ſold to Spaniards and French without any danger of cenſure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

FROM the Genoeſe and Piedmonteſe territories we enter Lombardy, under which denomination a large tract of weſtern Italy is comprehended, whoſe metropolis is Milan.

The inhabitants of Lombardy, and the Milaneſe eſpecially, value themſelves upon their being *de bon cœur:* a phraſe which in the ſpelling appears to be French, though it be ſomewhat different in the meaning as well as in the pronunciation, anſwering with much exactneſs to the Engliſh adjective *good-natured.* Nor do the Milaneſe boaſt unjuſtly of this good quality, which is ſo incontrovertibly granted to them by all other Italians, that they are perhaps the only nation in the world not hated by their neighbours. The Piedmonteſe, as I ſaid, hate the Genoeſe:

the Genoeſe deteſt the Piedmonteſe, and have no great kindneſs for the Tuſcans: the Tuſcans are not very fond of the Venetians or the Romans; the Romans are far from abounding in good will to the Neapolitans; and ſo round. This fooliſh world is ſo formed, that almoſt every nation is actuated by ſome ridiculous antipathy towards another, generally without knowing why. But the Milaneſe are, much to their honour, an exception to the general rule, and enjoy the privilege of being loved by all their neighbours, or at leaſt looked upon without any kind of averſion: and this noble privilege they certainly owe to their univerſal candour and cordiality.

They are commonly compared to the Germans for their plain honeſty, and to the French for their fondneſs of pomp and elegance in equipages and houſhold furniture: and I have a mind to add, that they reſemble likewiſe the Engliſh in their love of good eating, as well as in

their

their talking rather too long and too often about it; which has procured them the ludicrous appellation of *Lupi Lombardi*, that is, *Devourers of meat*.

Not only the generality of the Milaneſe nobles, but a great number of their gentry and merchants, keep open tables, at which plenty and facetiouſneſs preſide. Mr. Sharp has obſerved, that the Neapolitans keep more coaches in proportion than even the Engliſh and the French. The ſame remark he might have made with regard to the Milaneſe, had he known any thing of their town: and their great number of coaches is not merely the effect of their love of pomp and ſhow, as Mr. Sharp obſerves with his uſual flyneſs, but the natural conſequence of the riches of both countries, both fertile to a proverb.

The Milaneſe are likewiſe remarkable amongſt the Italians for their love of rural amuſements. They generally paſs the greateſt part of the ſummer and the

whole autumn in the country; and they have good reaſons for ſo doing, as that hilly province of theirs called *Monte di Brianza*, where their country-houſes chiefly lie, is in my opinion the moſt delightful in all Italy for the variety of its landſkapes, the gentleneſs of its rivers, and the multitude of its lakes *. There they retire as ſoon as the ſeaſon begins to grow hot, and paſs the time in a perpetual round of merriment, eating, drinking, dancing, and viſiting; and contributing ſmall ſums towards giving portions to the pretty wenches in their neighbourhood, in order to marry them inſtantly to their ſweethearts. There the richeſt people have their cappuccina's; that is, a part of their country-houſes built after the manner of a capuchin-convent diſtributed into many ſmall bedrooms, like cells, for the reception of

* From a ſmall town called Galbiate in this province, ſeven of thoſe lakes are ſeen.

their

their viſitors who are always welcome, provided they come fully reſolved to eat plentifully, to talk loud, and to be very merry.

Of the Mantuans, whoſe country forms another part of Auſtrian Lombardy, I have little to ſay, but that they reſemble the Milaneſe as little things reſemble great things. The ſame may be ſaid with regard to the inhabitants of the ſmall ſtates of Parma and Modena. Little nations have no very remarkable character of their own, but borrow it from their more conſiderable neighbours.

CHAP. XXVI.

LET us now enter the dominions of the Venetians, whoſe government, though it has continued the ſame for many centuries, has either been exalted as the moſt perfect, or cenſured as the very worſt, by innumerable ſcribblers, much to the honour of their political ſagacity, which led them into ſuch oppoſite extremes in their accounts of this renowned commonwealth.

When Henry VIII. firſt thought of having a college of phyſicians in this metropolis, he honoured the Italians ſo far as to declare in the letters patent granted for that purpoſe, that * in Italy *there were commonwealths well conſtituted*; and it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that Venice

* *Itaque partim bene inſtitutarum civitatum in Italia et aliis multis nationibus exemplum imitati, partim,* &c.

was

was not excluded from that kind of eulogy, becauſe in point of arts and ſciences Venice was then as famous as Rome and Florence.

But the favourable opinion entertained of us by king Henry, was ſoon after indirectly oppoſed, and with much vehemence, by a very great number of writers, who being actuated by an over-violent zeal, whilſt they endeavoured to bring the Chriſtian religion back to its primitive ſimplicity, thought proper to excite in many perſons ſo deep a hatred to the inhabitants of Italy, that the revolution of two centuries has not yet been able to obliterate it entirely, as may be ſeen in the bitter invectives we read ſo often in the Engliſh news-papers againſt the ſeveral nations of Italy, and in the frequent accounts which bigotted travellers ſtill give of them in print.

Amongſt thoſe who were moſt laviſh of abuſe and ſlander upon the Italians when the reformation was firſt introduced

in

in this kingdom, one of the foremoſt was Roger Aſcham, preceptor to queen Elizabeth, whoſe writings were lately dug out of obſcurity by means of a new edition.

Aſcham's writings are indeed as full of Greek and Latin as they can hold: but they breathe ſo virulent a ſpirit of unchriſtian enmity to our fellow-creatures on the other ſide of the Alps, (by whom he certainly was never offended) that, notwithſtanding the erudition with which they are ſtuffed, it had ſurely been better to let them lie for ever in that lucky darkneſs in which they were buried, if it be true that fanaticiſm can never be very beneficial to mankind, and that it is better we ſhould be univerſally benevolent than univerſally learned.

For a ſpecimen of the antipathy which animated Aſcham, let me only copy out of his ſchool-maſter a few of thoſe paſſages with regard to the Italians in general, and the Venetians in particular.

"*I was*

" *I was once in Italie myſelfe,*" ſays he; " *but, thanke God, my abode there was but* " NINE DAYS: *and yet I ſawe in that* " *little tyme, in one citie, more libertie to* " *ſinne, than ever I heard tell of in our* " *noble citie of London in nine years.*"

So vile a period as this could not have fallen from any pen, but that of a furious fanatic. Aſcham ran about Italy for the ſpace of *nine days only*, and muſt of courſe have ſtayed but *a few hours* in each of thoſe Italian cities which he viſited. And how was it poſſible for him *to ſee* in a few hours more wickedneſs in one of thoſe cities, than he ever *heard of* in London itſelf, which, if you credit him, was ſtill overſpread in his time with irreligion and vices of every kind?

And how could Aſcham aſcertain *in a few hours*, that his Italian contemporaries were ſunk " *in all corrupt manners and* " *licentiouſneſs of life?* That they had " *in* " *more reverence the triumphs of Petrarche* " *than the Geneſis of Moſes; made more* " *accounte*

" *accounte of Tullies offices than of St. Pauls* " *epiſtles; and of a tale in Boccace than a* " *ſtory in the bible?* That they did " *counte as fables the holy miſteries of Chriſ-* " *tian religion, and his goſpell onely ſerved* " *their civill policie?*" That they did " *care* " *for no ſcripture; made no counte of generall* " *counſels; contemned the conſent of the* " *church; moked the pope, railed on Luther,* " *allowed neither ſide, and liked none but* " *onely themſelves?*" How could he perſuade himſelf in a few hours, or even in nine days, that " *the marke the Italianes* " *ſhote at, the ende they looked for, the* " *heaven they deſired, was only their* " *preſent pleaſure and profit?*" That they were " *Epicures in eating, and Atheiſts in* " *doctrine?*" By what means could he verify in ſo ſhort a time, that in Venice it was " *counted good policie, when there were* " *four or five brethren in one familie, one* " *only to marry, and all the reſt to vaulter* " *with as little ſhame in open lecherie as* " *ſwine do in the common myre?*"

Theſe

Theſe and other ſuch aſſertions by Aſcham, muſt ſurely appear quite as ſhocking as the ſlaver of a mad dog to any body that is ever ſo little acquainted with human nature, and ever ſo little verſed in the Italian hiſtory and literature of Aſcham's times. The Italians in general, and the Venetians in particular, never deſerved the praiſe of univerſal ſanctity more than any other nation: but neither were they ſuch brutes as they are repreſented by that hot-headed ſlanderer.

However, I do not much wonder at the infamous accuſations of Aſcham. Many, and too many, have been the holy men in thoſe bleſſed times (Proteſtants as well as well as Papiſts) who recriprocally endeavoured to blacken each other's nations in ſuch abominable ſtrains. But I muſt wonder a little at the modern biographer of Aſcham, who, inſtead of cenſuring the outrageous madneſs of thoſe accuſations, has paſſed over them in ſhameful ſilence,

and

and only remarked with an admirable meekneſs, that Aſcham in his ſchool-maſter *has mentioned the vices of Venice with great ſeverity*. In this age of good ſenſe and moderation it ought to be the duty of every honeſt man, whenever occaſion offers, to ſpeak with contempt and abhorrence of the many odious enthuſiaſts who wrote in the times of Aſcham; and no eminence of learning, or affectation of holineſs, ought to make us overlook the deteſtable brutality of him, who, as far as he could, endeavoured thus to ſet the great republic of mankind by the ears, and to kindle in one part of the human ſpecies a violent and unextinguiſhable hatred againſt the other.

And now, Mr. Sharp, you who with ſo much candour and prettineſs have trod in Aſcham's footſteps, though ſcarcely half ſo well ſtored with Greek and Latin, let me intreat you, good Sir, to look again into the ſermon preached by our naughty

Jeſuit

Jeſuit againſt queen Elizabeth*: compare it carefully with the few paragraphs here tranſcribed out of her preceptor's works, and tell me ingenuouſly which of the two deſerves beſt a panegyric from your elegant pen.

Mr. Sharp, whoſe rage againſt the Venetians is no leſs than Aſcham's, has already given me room to tell my readers what he is to think about their pretended univerſal corruption. To what I ſaid on this particular, I muſt add their common ſaying, that to make a Venetian happy, three things are required: *La mattina una meſſeta, l'apodiſnar una baſſeta, e la ſera una donneta*; which may be thus Engliſhed: *a ſhort maſs in the morning, a little gaming in the afternoon, and a pretty girl in the evening.* And here I own that this ſaying, which certainly contains the chief

* See Mr. Sharp's thirty-ninth letter, in which he gives us the ſubſtance of an Italian ſermon, as he had it from a Roman catholic lady.

outlines of the Venetians' character, does not ſet their morals in the moſt favourable light. But while, upon the teſtimony of their own words, we condemn them for ſome bad qualities, (which are pretty univerſal in Mr. Sharp's country as well as in Venice) let us likewiſe take notice, that the ſame common ſaying which appriſes us of their capital vices, informs us alſo of their having at leaſt ſome regard to their religion. It is true, that ſuch ſlight performances of religious duties will be far from rendering them perfect; but people whoſe principal duty is their firſt morning-thought, cannot be ſo deeply ſunk into corruption as the ancient Sharps and modern Aſchams would make us believe. The Venetians are indeed more addicted to ſenſuality than more northern nations, and love cards rather too paſſionately: but their fondneſs for cards and women excludes them not from the poſſeſſion of many virtues and good qualities very eſtimable and

uſeful

uſeful in ſociety. They are moſt remarkably temperate in their way of living, though very liberal in ſpending, and though few towns in Europe are ſo plentifully furniſhed with all kinds of proviſions and articles of luxury as theirs: they are not addicted to harſh cenſures of their neighbours, though they are far from contemning themſelves; and they ſpeak with charity and reſerve of other people's errors and foibles. They are ſo characteriſtically tender-hearted, that the leaſt affectionate word melts them at once, makes them lay aſide any animoſity, and ſuddenly reconciles them to thoſe whom they diſliked before. Of this quality in them, ſtrong traces are preſently diſcovered in their very dialect, which ſeems almoſt compoſed of nothing elſe, but of kind words and endearing epithets.

However, this humane turn of mind ſhows itſelf much ſeldomer in their nobility than in the people. The nobles indeed, if you liſten to their ſpeech,

ſeem, like other Venetians, to love a warm exchange of terms of kindneſs with their equals: they hug, and kiſs, and bow deep, and bleſs each other whenever they meet. But there is no need of great penetration to find, that all this kindneſs amongſt them is a farce. The members of an Ariſtocracy cannot be very ſuſceptible of the tender paſſions, becauſe their inceſſant competition for power renders them in a good meaſure inſenſible to any thing elſe, and of courſe to the ſweets of friendſhip: and with regard to their inferiours, though they ſpeak to them in a very ſoothing tone, yet one may eaſily diſcover that they would rather chuſe to impreſs them with an awe of their ſuperiority, than to be beloved. With an art peculiar to themſelves, they mix their kindneſs with a ſtatelineſs and diſregard that certainly cannot proceed from natural goodneſs and benevolence.

It is well known that the Venetian nobles, together with the very meaneſt of their

their ſervants and dependants, are forbidden by a moſt ſevere law to ſpeak or hold any correſpondence with any perſon whatſoever who reſides in Venice in a public character from any foreign ſovereign, or even with the ſervants and dependants of ſuch perſons.

The dread of this law is very great amongſt them. I have ſeen myſelf one of their moſt powerful ſenators turn back precipitately, on being told at a friend's door, that the hair-dreſſer of a foreign miniſter was with the gentleman whom he came to viſit. Nay, it is a common cuſtom there, when any burgeſs, merchant, or other perſon of that claſs, gives a ball or other public entertainment in his houſe (as it often happens in carnival time) to have a man at the door with the livery of a foreign miniſter on his back, merely to fright away the nobles or their domeſtics, who will often endeavour to force themſelves in on ſuch occaſions. Even the keeper of a coffee-houſe, who is

deſirous to get rid of the nobles, their ſervants and dependants who frequent his ſhop, needs only contrive to have a ſervant of any foreign miniſter to come twice or thrice to drink a diſh of coffee there, and his troubleſome cuſtomers will preſently diſappear. And as all ſtrangers of any diſtinction generally frequent the houſes of the foreign miniſters, the nobles dare not ſee them often, and even ſhun thoſe places where ſtrangers reſort moſt. By theſe means they are almoſt reduced to the neceſſity of only converſing among themſelves; and as very few of them are ever allowed to travel by the inquiſitors of ſtate (without whoſe permiſſion they will ſcarcely venture to go ſo far as their country-houſes when ſituated at any conſiderable diſtance from Venice) their manners are borrowed from no nation (as is partly the caſe with all other Italians) but are perfectly their own, and have not changed for many centuries.

The

The force of this law; their being brough up with a notion that they are equal in dignity to ſovereign princes; their conſtant attendance on public counſels; their perpetual intriguing, either to acquire power to themſelves or diminiſh it in others; their wearing a dreſs conſiderably different from that of other men; the abject demeanour of their inferiors towards them, whom they have long accuſtomed to tremble at the frown of the very leaſt among them: their groſs ignorance of the laws, cuſtoms, and manners of other nations, and ſeveral other ſuch cauſes, render the Venetian nobility an object of curioſity, and worthy the critical examination of an intelligent foreigner, who endeavours after an enlarged knowledge of mankind by ſeeing in what manner human nature ſhows itſelf in all varieties of ſituation. Yet ſo it happens, that it is but ſeldom any foreigner is animated by this kind of curioſity. Inſtead of conquering that little averſion

which naturally ariſes in us towards thoſe who make it a point to render themſelves difficult of acceſs, the generality of foreigners ſhun the converſation of the Venetian nobles, or grow preſently ſick of it, on diſcovering that it is too uniform, local, and egotiſtical at the commencement of their acquaintance. But let acquaintance ripen a while into familiarity, as it ſoon does with the help of ſome dexterity and patience; and the oddeſt compoſitions in the world will be found among them; and this ariſing from their contracted habits of converſation, joined by a ſingular combination to an enlarged practice of important and delicate buſineſs of ſtate. One may ſoon diſcover amongſt them ſo many inſtances of openneſs and reſerve, of ſagacity and imprudence, of courage and timidity, of prodigality and thriftineſs, of knowledge and ignorance, and many other oppoſite qualities ſo perfectly blended together in the ſame indi-

vidual,

vidual, that I know no ſet of men in Europe ſo much worth the trouble of being thoroughly ſifted as the noblemen of Venice. With regard to the Venetian people, thoſe who want to keep fair with their nobles, or make them friends, have a very ready means of admittance to their kindneſs, by only praiſing them in the fulſomeſt terms, making them believe that their commonwealth is one of the moſt formidable powers upon earth, and that themſelves, individually, are the moſt knowing, generous, and reſpectable people in the world: and I do not know whether it is more ſhocking or more diverting to ſee how open the generality of the Venetian nobles are to the vileſt flattery.

However, though the people of Venice be great flatterers of their *paroni*'s, or *maſters*, (ſo they call their nobles) yet they proved in general very pleaſing to me for the ſpace of about five years that I

lived there at different periods. They are indeed not more eaſy of acceſs to foreigners than the nobles themſelves, on account of the great confluence of ſtrangers who continually reſort in numbers to their town; and they juſtly think it imprudent to admit them eaſily under their roofs and to their familiarity. But when a ſtranger is once declared a friend, it is not eaſy to give an idea of their cordiality and attachment to him. Few of them are fond of ſeeing their maſters within their doors, but eaſily aſſociate with their equals, or with ſuch foreigners as have lived ſo long amongſt them as to be known for prudent and joyous men. I ſay *joyous*, becauſe without ſuch a quality no body is welcome to a Venetian. *Co no i xe mati no li volemo*, "*if they are not joyous, we will not have them*," is another of their moſt frequent ſayings.

Of their loweſt people, and eſpecially of their gondoliers, I need not ſay much, becauſe

becauſe almoſt all travel-writers have taken abundant notice of their manners and peculiarities. It is already well known that in general they pique themſelves much on their lively ſayings and repartees; on their being great connoiſſeurs in theatrical matters; and that they are to be much depended upon in aſſiſting a love-intrigue.

To theſe outlines of the gondoliers' character, I will only add, that they are in general very much taken with verſe and rhyme, and that almoſt all of them, even their women, can repeat the poems of Arioſto and Taſſo, beſides many compoſitions in their own dialect, when they are wrote in that kind of ſtanza's which we call *ottava rima*. Such ſtanza's and poems they are very fond of ſinging, particularly by moon-ſhine. And as the tune to which they ſing them is ancient; and very fine in the opinion of our muſicians, my muſical reader cannot be diſpleaſed

pleaſed to have it here, as ſignor Giardini has done me the favour to write it for me.

As to the cuſtoms and manners of thoſe provinces of Italy, which belong to the republic, they are conſiderably different from thoſe of Venice, and approach nearly to thoſe of Auſtrian Lombardy. The people of Breſcia * made it formerly a point of honour to be great bullies: and I remember the time myſelf, when it was dangerous to have any dealings with them, as they were much inclined to quarrel merely for a whim, and would preſently challenge one to fight with piſtol or blunderbuſs. And when it was the faſhion amongſt our great folks to have an enemy treacherouſly murdered, a bravo was eaſily hired amongſt the low people of this town and province. But

* Breſcia is the capital of a fine Venetian province, that contains very near a million of inhabitants.

ſuch

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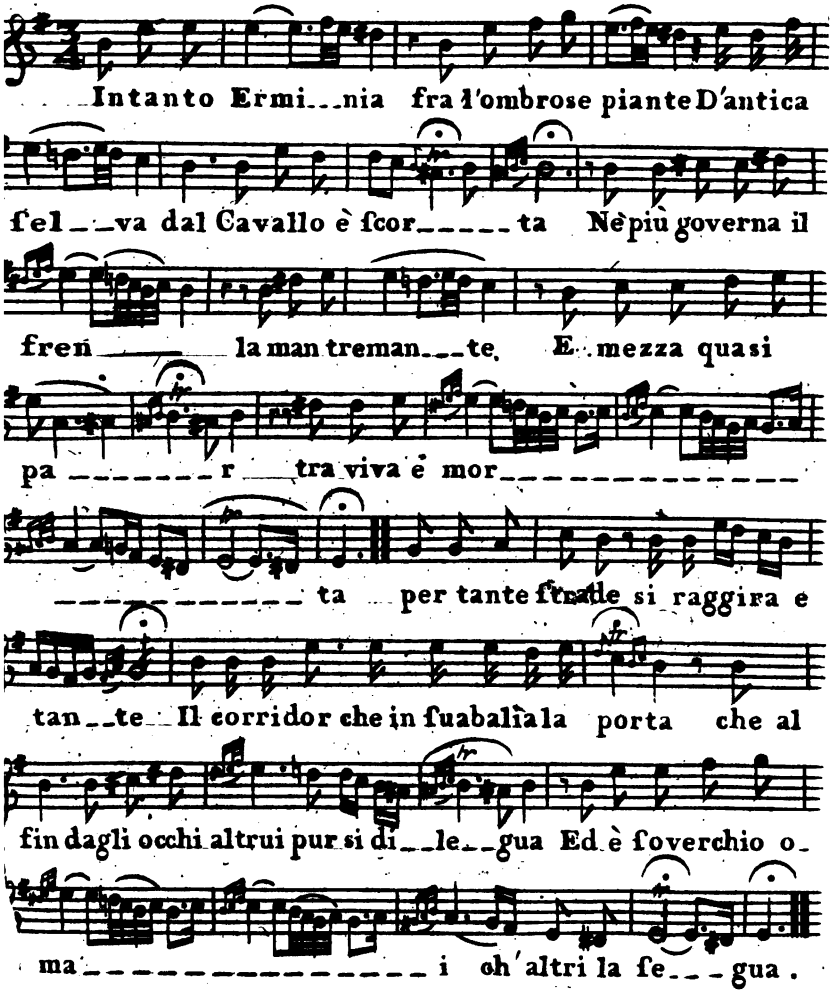
Tasso alla Veneziana



ſuch abominable cuſtoms have now been aboliſhed many years; and the Breſcians as well as all other Venetian ſubjects in Italy, are at preſent almoſt as civilized as the Milaneſe themſelves.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

IT has been often aſſerted by writers of travels, that many of the Italian provinces are but thinly inhabited, and that the badneſs of the government is the cauſe of their depopulation. If there be any truth in this remark, it is certainly with regard to Ferrara and its territory.

This town, at which from the Venetian we enter the Papal dominions, had formerly a pretty good reputation in the time of its dukes, not only on account of its populouſneſs, but alſo by reaſon of the many men of genius and learning who flouriſhed within its walls; among whom it is ſufficient to mention Arioſto and Taſſo, who both happened to compoſe there thoſe epic poems, which never were rivalled by any ſimilar production, that of Milton only excepted. For one

city

city to have entertained two epic poets of the firſt rate, is a rare honour; and ſuch, as no other town either ancient or modern can poſſibly boaſt of.

The natives of this duchy, which I have only viſited in a curſory manner, are very modeſt and ceremonious, if one may judge of their private deportment by what they appear in their places of public reſort. By virtue of an ancient privilege, whereof they are not a little proud, even their taylors and coblers can ſtrut about with a ſword at their ſide. This would appear ridiculous in any other part of Italy, where it is the cuſtom of gentlemen only to wear a ſword; and the advantage derived to the Ferrareſe from this privilege is not very conſiderable, as it is limited to the furniſhing the towns and provinces around with ſkilful fencing-maſters; nor is it unlikely that the name of Ferrara, ſtill given to the ſword by the Scotch Highlanders, came originally from thence.

From

From this duchy we enter the ſtate of Bologna, of which the pope is likewiſe poſſeſſed. Bologna has been much renowned for many ages on account of its univerſity, which boaſts of being the moſt ancient in Europe; and even to this day preſerves a kind of pre-eminence over all other Italian univerſities, as is ſaid to be furniſhed with learned profeſſors more abundantly than any other, though their ſtipends are much ſmaller.

The nobility and genteel people of Bologna have long poſſeſſed the reputation of being upon the whole more acquainted with books than thoſe of other Italian towns; and in my ſhort ſtay there I found no reaſon for contradicting the public opinion, as I could not help obſerving, that ſeveral of their women apply to various branches of learning. It is certain that no town in Italy can boaſt at preſent of three ſuch ſiſters as the Zanotti's, who have greatly improved an Italian epic

poem

poem of the burleſque kind by their tranſlation in their own dialect: nor have we any woman that can be compared with Laura Baſſi, who after having regularly gone through the ſtudies uſual in univerſities, and held the uſual public diſputations, took the degree of doctor when but eighteen years old, and was afterwards made profeſſor of natural hiſtory and mathematics, which ſhe has long read to numerous hearers, hiding her petticoats with the profeſſorial gown.

Bologna is likewiſe famous for the great number of excellent painters it has produced, at whoſe head are placed Guido Reni, and three or four of the Caracci-family.

The Bologneſe populace are reckoned even more witty and facetious than the Venetian gondoliers; and many of their lively ſayings and humorous ſtories are repeated, which, as we ſay, might force a laugh from a biſhop.

Of the Romagna, Umbria, and other papal provinces, I have little to ſay, as I have only croſſed them haſtily. It is affirmed that their inhabitants, the Romagnole eſpecially, are remarkable for their rudeneſs and ferocious temper. And indeed, if general and frequent ſwearing may be taken as a ſure mark of ſuch bad qualities, they are not wronged when they are ſo characteriſed, as in no part of Italy were my ears more and oftener offended than in Romagna. However, in ſeveral of its towns I have had opportunities to converſe with ſome of the better ſort, and found them as amiable and polite, as thoſe of Ancona and other towns of the Marca, where I have reſided longer, and where amiable and polite people are far from being rare.

But leaving the eccleſiaſtical provinces, let us come to their famous metropolis, which it is ſcarce poſſible to paſs a whole day in any polite part of Europe without hearing mentioned. And here let me premiſe,

premiſe, that we muſt not form our judgment of the modern Romans upon the poor narrations of Mr. Sharp and other ſuch miſerable critics, who never take notice of any thing within the walls of modern Rome, but pictures, ſtatues, and baſſorelievo's, or maſſes, proceſſions, and benedictions.

It is true, as theſe quickſighted gentry have cunningly and reapeatedly remarked, that the preſent Romans cannot by any means be brought into any ſort of compariſon with their predeceſſors of twenty centuries ago, nor can they boaſt any longer of Camillus's and Fabius's, or of Ceſar's and Cato's. It is beſides a moſt certain fact, that their empire does not now extend ſo far as the Iſter and the Euphrates, as it did in times of yore. But as no body can reaſonably be made anſwerable for the changes brought about by the unavoidable revolutions of time, and as no modern nation can enter into any near compariſon with the ancient Romans,

to what end do theſe learned travellers reproach the preſent Romans with a degeneracy which could not be avoided, and with a diminution of power which was effected by an irreſiſtible concurrence of cauſes aſſiſted by a long ſeries of centuries?

If, inſtead of forming unfair parallels between the ancient and the modern Romans, our learned travellers would endeavour to diſplay their abundant erudition in a manner a little more reaſonable, they might probably be ſoon ſenſible, that, far from deſerving our contempt, very few amongſt the modern nations are ſo juſtly intitled to a large ſhare of our admiration as thoſe we call the modern Romans, in oppoſition to the ancient, if a large ſhare of our admiration is juſtly due to thoſe, who by a forcible and long-continued exertion of their underſtanding, have been able to contrive and brin- -ſuch a powerful ſyſtem of eccle- -n- ment in Europe, and inter-

pactly with all its political eſtabliſhments, as to make it ſcarce poſſible for any nation, however deſirous to be freed from their yoke, to diſentangle the ſtrong tiſſue, and act independently of the Romans, who had really no natural right to impoſe upon them any ſort of laws.

The proteſtants of England and of other parts, are certainly welcome to exclaim againſt the politics of modern Rome, by which they have long been ſufferers, and are ſtill kept in ſome awe. Yet theſe politics, ſo hateful to them, can never be a proper ſubject of their contempt when conſidered with a ſtateſman's eye. After having ſeen the religion of their forefathers entirely changed, their capital demoliſhed, their imperial crown carried away to old Byſantium, their provinces parcelled out amongſt ſeveral barbarians iſſued from the north, themſelves reduced to an inconſiderable number, and almoſt nothing left them, but a ruined town and

a ſmall territory made barren by devaſtation and time, the ſucceſſors of the old Romans ſtill found ſo much reſource in their own minds, as to ſtrike out a plan of dominion little leſs than univerſal, and found even then means to have their new and petty ſovereign acknowledged and revered as the very firſt of many, who, each ſingly, were far more powerful than him. And how can any body dream of holding the contrivers and executors of ſuch a ſcheme in contempt, and perſuade themſelves that the Romans were never fit for any thing elſe, ever ſince their great fall, but to draw pictures, and liſten to confeſſions?

To extend ſovereignty over diſtant regions, to deſtroy Incas and make ſlaves of Caciques, to depoſe Nabobs and plunder the tropics and the line by means of numerous fleets and formidable armies, may be very difficult and very glorious. But ſtill it cannot merit ſo large a ſhare of our admiration as to preſerve long, and with-

out

out any real forces, a ſuperiority over ſuperior nations, as the ſons of Rome have certainly done for many ages ſince the overthrow of their empire, and continue ſtill to do in a certain degree. And to what means did they betake themſelves in order to bring about and firmly eſtabliſh that ſuperiority? The weak ſons of Rome ſcarcely uſed any other means, but that of ſending brieves and bulls about, ſigned by their petty new ſovereign, who in the ſame breath calls himſelf a poor fiſherman and a vicar of God, or an humble ſervant to all his humble ſervants, and a king over all kings. Yet theſe inſtruments had their operation from the ſkill of thoſe who uſed them: from their ſtudying the tempers and underſtanding the foibles of character in every other nation; from their profiting of the diviſions between ſovereign princes, or between ſovereigns and ſubjects; and from a very extenſive plan of political correſpondence and conſtant negotiation.

But the deep-laid ſchemes of the Romans have at laſt in a great meaſure been defeated, and thoſe whom they had ſo long ſubjected, have at length become ſenſible of their own ſtrength, and are no more the dupes of abſurdities and contradictions. I grant this: but grant me likewiſe, that a good ſhare of our admiration, as I ſaid, is certainly due to thoſe, who hit upon a political ſyſtem never thought of by any nation, ancient or modern: a ſyſtem that has been enfeebled at laſt by its own long ſucceſs, like the army of Pyrrhus by ſignal and repeated victories.

Yet whatever fire may kindle me when I revolve in my mind the ancient as well as the modern wonders of our imperial Rome, I am not ſo deep ſunk into enthuſiaſm, as to aver, that it ſtill contains many men like thoſe who have by turns lorded over a great part both of the Pagan and Chriſtian world. The Romans of to-day have ſomewhat degenerated from their

their anceſtors; or, to ſpeak more properly, their art of managing nations has at laſt been learned by other people. The principles of policy and government are at preſent more generally underſtood; and the pope is not now the only prince who has the means of an univerſal information and extenſive influence. However to me the Romans ſtill appear ſuperior on the whole to all other people in Europe, or at leaſt to all other nations in Italy; and it is owing only to an unfavourable concurrence of circumſtances, that ſome of them do not actually govern foreign countries, as was done not a great while ago by their Mazzarini's and their Alberoni's.

As the conſtitution of their government gives a chance to many of them either to acquire ſovereignty, or become cloſely connected with a ſovereign, many Romans have their minds much expanded, and their imaginations made very active. For the ſame reaſon they are habitually well-

well-bred, careful to pleaſe, and anxious to get new friends and new connections. Their cardinals and principal monſignori's ſeem in general to have a greater turn for the ſcience of politics than for any other; and it is believed that a ſtranger who has any public buſineſs to tranſact with their ſtateſmen, had need be very dexterous and cautious not to be outwitted. As to their middling people they are much addicted to the polite arts, and above all to poetry; witneſs the account I have already given of their Arcadia: and as to their populace, they are rather daring and ferocious than otherwiſe. I cannot be more minute in the diſcription of them, becauſe I had not ſuch opportunities of obſerving them, as I have had with regard to other Italians.]

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

IT is but little more than three centuries ſince that province of Italy which lies between the Tyrrhene ſea and the higheſt hills of the Apennine, was divided into eight or nine ſmall republics, each ſo jealous of the reſt, that for a conſiderable ſpace of time they made war upon each other with as much fury, as the tenuity of their forces would poſſibly permit.

Such a condition of violence muſt always at length prove fatal: and ſo it happened, that at length their general downfal was brought on by their general contentions, and all thoſe ſmall republics, except the little one of Lucca, were reduced under ſubjection to an abſolute ſovereign, who to this day preſerves the title of Grand Duke.

If the uniform accounts of numerous chroniclers and hiſtorians are to be credited, the

the Tuſcans, when in that divided and republican ſtate, were a moſt ferocious and brutal people, always ready to oppreſs each other, and to revenge the ſlighteſt offences by murder and aſſaſſination: a thing not to be wondered at, as they had no ſettled body of laws, and each man was in a great meaſure left to the direction of his own paſſions.

But, after having irrecoverably loſt that which in the common language of politicians has long been honoured with the name of liberty, though, as they enjoyed it, it is by no means deſerving of that reſpectable appellation, the inclination and manners of the Tuſcans underwent a very happy change. Arts and literature were the only occupations in which under their new form of government they could find full employment for their buſy and reſtleſs minds. They turned to them all on a ſudden; and with ſuch eagerneſs, immediately after having been ſubdued by the

De Medici's, that they ſoon forced mankind to look upon them as the only people in Europe fit to be their teachers; and as to the arts, eſpecially thoſe termed *the polite*, they reached in a little time to ſo great a perfection, as to leave almoſt no hopes to future cultivators ever to ſurpaſs, or even equal them.

On ſeeing literature and arts thus happily revived in Tuſcany under the patronage of the firſt Medicean princes, ſeveral of the greateſt among the ſovereigns of Europe became ſenſible of their efficacy towards poliſhing and humanizing our ſpecies: they were therefore made deſirous of having them introduced into their reſpective dominions.

To obtain this laudable end, ſome kings of France invited ſucceſſively many of the moſt celebrated artiſts and men of letters from Florence and other parts of Tuſcany, and encouraged them with ſuch liberality, that in a little time they were able to produce a very remarkable change in

in the manners of that nation, till then addicted to almoſt nothing elſe but barbarous gallantry and the deſtructive art of war. Nor was it long before the lively French rivalled their ultramontane maſters in many things; nay, they improved ſo faſt, and attained ſo quickly to that civility and elegance which always follow cloſe on the ſteps of arts and literature, that French politeneſs ſoon became a kind of univerſal pattern, upon which all other European nations ever after condeſcended to model themſelves. Thus Tuſcany was the miſtreſs of politeneſs to France, as France has ſince been to all the weſtern world; and this little province may juſtly boaſt of having produced (and nearly at one time) a greater number of extraordinary men than perhaps any of the moſt extenſive European kingdoms.

The good effects cauſed in Tuſcany by that diligent cultivation of arts and literature continue to this preſent time. It is true that the Tuſcans are inferiour to

their

their forefathers in many reſpects, and particularly in the polite arts: but where is the modern nation whoſe artiſts can claim any equality with the Michelangelo's, Lionardo's, Donatello's, Cellini's, and other ingenious men of that happy age? Yet the Tuſcans are ſtill poſſeſſed of as much ſkill and taſte in thoſe arts as any other modern nation; witneſs the uniform accounts given by almoſt all travellers of their elegance in their buildings, furniture, and general manner of living; and witneſs the many Tuſcan artiſts found in almoſt all the capital towns of Europe, of whom London does not want a tolerable ſhare: and as to academical accompliſhments, thoſe who have taken the trouble of reading the works of Gori, Cocchi, Lami, Perelli, and other modern Tuſcans, will certainly allow, that the inhabitants of their metropolis are juſtly intitled to as much honour as the learned of any town in Chriſtendom of equal dimenſion,

menſion, or an equal number of inhabitants.

Among the general characteriſtics of the Tuſcans I have already touched upon their love of poetry, and, what is altogether ſingular in them, their common cuſtom of *improvviſare*; that is, of ſinging verſes extempore to the guitar and other ſtringed inſtruments.

Both theſe qualities in them are of a very ancient date. The Tuſcans were ſmitten by the charms of poetry to a greater degree than any other people, as ſoon as their language began to be turned towards verſe. One of our old novelliſts (Franco Sacchetti, if I remember well) ſays, that the common people of Florence uſed commonly to ſing the poem of Dante about the ſtreets, even during the life of that poet, whom we juſtly conſider as our firſt writer of note. It appears beſides, that the ancient odes, ſongs, and ballads collected by Laſca, and printed under the title

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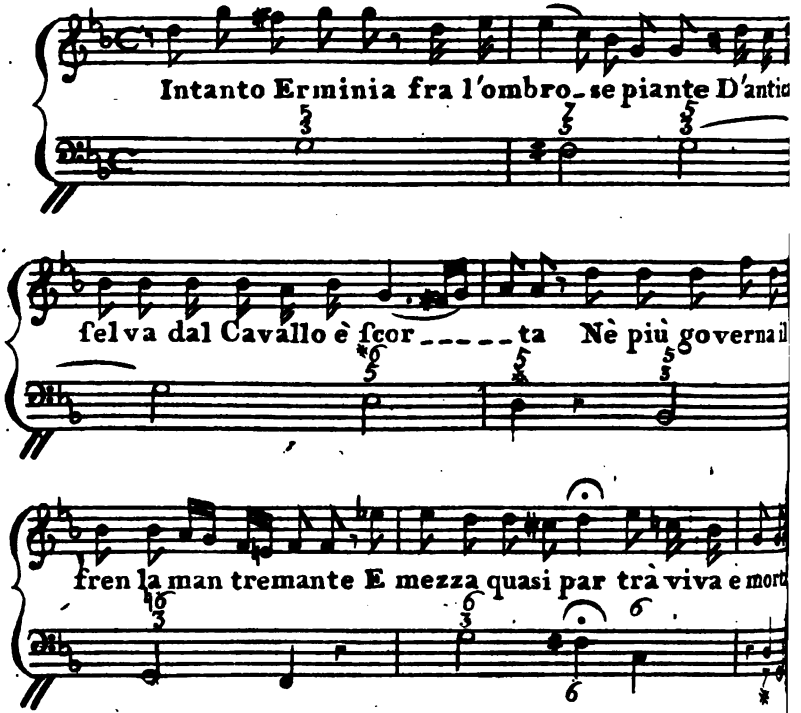
Ottave alla Fiorentina



Per tante ſtrade ſi raggira e tante
Il corridor che in ſua balìa la porta,
Che alfin dagli occhi altrui pur ſi dilegua
Ed e ſoverchio omai ch'altri la ſegua.

title of *Canti Carnaſcialeſchi* *, were for the greateſt part compoſed by the loweſt among the Tuſcan people; that is, by carpenters, coopers, barbers, ſhoemakers, and other perſons of this claſs.

With regard to their *improvviſare*, my Engliſh reader will not eaſily be made to conceive it as a thing, which requires great poetical powers; nor is it poſſible to give a juſt idea of it to a ſtranger. Yet I can aver, that it is a very great entertainment, and what cannot fail of exciting very great ſurpriſe, to hear two of their beſt improvviſatori, *et cantare pares et reſpondere parati*, and each eager to excel, expatiate in *ottava rima* upon any ſubject moderately ſuſceptible of poetical amplification. Several times have I been

* The title of that collection runs thus: *Tutti i Trionfi, Carri, Maſcherate, o Canti carnaſcialeſchi andati per Firenze dal tempo del magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici, ſino all' anno* 1559. In 8vo. It was reprinted at Florence in 1750, with the falſe date of *Coſmopoli*.

aſtoniſhed

aſtoniſhed at the rapidity of their expreſſions, the eaſineſs of their rhymes, the juſtneſs of their numbers, the copiouſneſs of their images, and the general warmth and impetuoſity of their thoughts: and I have ſeen crowds of liſteners hurried as well as myſelf into a vortex of delight, if I may ſo expreſs it, whoſe motion acquired more and more violence as the bards grew more and more inflamed by the repeated ſhoutings of the byſtanders, and by the force of that oppoſition which each encountered from his antaganiſt.

The origin of this cuſtom among theſe people cannot be eaſily aſcertained; or, to ſpeak with more propriety, I have endeavoured in vain to diſcover it in thoſe days, when Italian poetry took up more of my time than it does at preſent. It is reported by the biographer of Luigi Pulci, that this poet, who flouriſhed about the year 1450, uſed often to ſing long canto's extempore at the table of Laurence De Medici's. It is even pre-

tended

tended he put afterwards into writing many of thoſe canto's by the advice and aſſiſtance of Laurence himſelf, of Argyropolo, Politian Giambullari, Marſilius Ficinus, and other learned men, familiarly admitted to his ſuppers by that famous patron of learning; and that the *Morgante Maggiore* was thus formed; a long poem* of the epic kind, incoherent indeed, and full of extravagancies, and yet no leſs delightful than the Furioſo itſelf.

That ſenſibility of heart which has long made the Tuſcans thus enamoured with poetry, has likewiſe totally wore out that ferocity for which they were ſo remarkable in the brutal times of the Guelphs and the Gibelines; and has brought them to be perhaps the moſt gentle and amiable nation now extant. This character of gentleneſs is indeed eaſily to be perceived by any traveller as ſoon as from Bologna he reaches the

* Printed for the firſt time at Venice in 1494.

CHAP. XXIX.

I Have little more to add to what has been ſaid in the foregoing ſix chapters with regard to thoſe characteriſtical marks that diſtinguiſh one Italian nation from another. The Neapolitans I ſhall not venture to deſcribe, though they are the moſt numerous nation of Italy, becauſe I have not viſited any part of their country. Having formerly beſtowed ſome ſtudy on their dialect, and had an opportunity of making ſome obſervations on ſeveral Neapolitans whom I have met with in different places, I might poſſibly be in a condition to form ſome ſlight judgment of their manners. But theſe and other ſuch helps cannot prove quite ſufficient. Therefore I think it will be the wiſeſt part to paſs them over in ſilence, and refer my reader to Mr. Sharp's book, by which it appears that at Naples the nobility have

ſcarce any ſenſe, wit, virtue, or money left; that the gentry feed upon ſtewed cabbage for the ſake of keeping a coach; and that the lower people are nothing elſe but a hateful gang of idle, ſuperſtitious, and bloody villains.

CHAP. XXX.

I Have already ſaid, that one of the greateſt difficulties a ſtranger travelling through Italy has to encounter, is the remarkable difference between the dialects of its ſeveral provinces. A man may traverſe all England without ſuffering any inconvenience on this account, becauſe England is ſo conſtituted, that a large number of its inhabitants are perpetually changing place, and ſhifting from all parts of the country to the metropolis, or from the metropolis to all parts of the country. Theſe inceſſant migrations, beſides ſeveral other cauſes, bring all the Engliſh to ſpeak nearly after the ſame manner, as their chief dialect becomes daily more in uſe, and is continually ſpreading. A ſtranger therefore who intends to travel over this kingdom, needs but

but to learn the ſpeech of the metropolis, and he may be ſure that he never ſhall want language in his tour. But in Italy the caſe is very different. The people of one ſtate ſeldom travel into another; ſo that their dialects undergo no material alteration, and are preſerved in what may be called their barbarous purity. It is true that all the Italians endeavour to write in the language of Tuſcany; and throughout the whole peninſula the ſermons run in the ſame language likewiſe. Yet theſe two practices do not greatly contribute towards ſpreading the Tuſcan language, becauſe in their daily intercourſe all Italians uſe the ſpeech of their own narrow diſtricts, and never trouble their heads with the language of Tuſcany but when they converſe with ſtrangers. Nay, when an Italian ſpeaks that language, though he generally makes uſe of Tuſcan words, yet he ſtill retains his native pronunciation, and, what is ſtill worſe, his native phraſeology. Even at

the courts of our ſeveral ſovereigns, and in our halls of judicature, every body follows this method; and ſhould any Italian, but a Tuſcan, aſpire in his common diſcourſe to Tuſcan purity, he would be laughed at, as guilty of a ridiculous affectation. All Italians born out of Tuſcany think the Tuſcan language ſhould be confined to mere writing and the pulpit. Hence it follows that a Bergamaſco, for inſtance, may ſpeak to another Bergamaſco in Naples, or a Genoeſe to another Genoeſe in Venice, and be underſtood by a Neapolitan or Venetian not much more than if they ſpoke Arabic. And yet all our various dialects are nothing elſe but inflections and modifications of the ſame language; nor are there many words in our dialects which cannot be derived from the Tuſcan; nay, thoſe few are conſidered in each reſpective place as mere tranſitory cant.

This difficulty of underſtanding each other amongſt the Italians, inſtead of leſſening

ſening by lapſe of time and by the annual encreaſe of books, rather augments every day, becauſe every day there are people in all parts of Italy, who, out of affection to their native dialects, write in them many compoſitions in verſe. This affection is ſo common and ſo ſtrong, that it has procured us four intire tranſlations of Taſſo's Jeruſalem into as many of our dialects; that is, into Venetian, Neapolitan, Bergamaſco, and Bologneſe; beſides a fifth in Milaneſe, made by one Domenico Baleſtieri, which he read to me in manuſcript. We have likewiſe a conſiderable number of comedies and farces written in more than twenty of our dialects, which are often acted in ſchools and colleges by young ſtudents in carnival-time, and in ſummer and autumn by gentlemen and ladies in the theatres they have at their country-houſes.

From this account the reader will eaſily ſee how difficult it muſt prove for any ſtranger to give any perfectly good account of

of Italy, and how abſurd and ridiculous thoſe travellers are, who ſpeak of the Italians without any diſcrimination, attributing one general character to them all. How can any body be perſuaded, that people who differ ſo much in ſpeech as ſcarcely to underſtand each other, have their cuſtoms and manners in common?

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

IN peruſing the books of travellers we are naturally led to deſire and expect ſome account of the domeſtic life of the people whom the author has viſited; but few of them are poſſeſſed of the firſt and moſt indiſpenſible requiſite towards the performance of this taſk, as few of them are acquainted with the neceſſary tongues; and he who has not a competent knowledge of the language of the country he viſits, cannot eaſily be admitted by the natives to that familiarity of intercourſe which might afford him ſufficient opportunities for making remarks on their private life. Yet it is this familiar intercourſe alone, that can enable him to give an exact deſcription of the occupations and amuſements of that domeſtic life, from

from which we are to form a juſt idea of them.

But though ignorance of the language is, amongſt other cauſes, a great obſtacle to a travel-writer in giving a juſt delineation of the common life and common diverſions of the nations he viſits, yet we muſt not haſtily conclude that the ſame will, on the other hand, prove eaſy to an individual of thoſe nations themſelves. A native will likewiſe find many difficulties in his way when he attempts to give foreigners an idea of his countrymen, becauſe, being familiarized to all their peculiarities, he will not be able to diſtinguiſh thoſe that will intereſt more than others the curioſity of a foreigner; beſides that many of them will appear to him not worthy of remark; and their number may alſo be ſo great, as to make it impoſſible for him to commit them all to writing without riſking the charge of being tedious: ſo that the bare ſelecting ſuch particulars as may beſt anſwer his purpoſe

and

and ſatisfy curioſity, muſt certainly require no ſmall ſkill in the choice, and no vulgar method in the narration.

Of theſe difficulties I am ſo ſenſible, that I muſt previouſly enter a proteſt to my Engliſh reader, and plainly tell him, that he is not to expect from me any ſatisfactory detail upon this particular. I will indeed endeavour in a few of the following pages to put together ſome little facts, in order to aſſiſt his imagination in forming an idea of the manner in which life is commonly ſpent amongſt us. But, ſhould chance direct me chiefly toward trifles and follies, I hope he will readily grant me his pardon, if he conſiders that I am here attempting to deſcribe that, which, all the world over, is generally ſpent in follies and trifles; and, what is ſtill worſe, is not only ſo ſpent by the vulgar, but, alas! by the very deepeſt thinkers and moſt ſupercilious philoſophers.

Amongſt the higheſt ranks of mankind, as well as amongſt thoſe who pretend to be

be much converſant with books and philoſophy, there are in all Chriſtian countries many, who profeſs to be deiſts and atheiſts; and of theſe I have reaſon for ſaying that there are ſome in almoſt all our cities and towns. But as their number is not very conſiderable when compared to the bulk of the nation, and as moſt of them conform in outward appearance to the national mode of religion, I do not think it neceſſary to take any particular notice of them here, and point out the attempts that a few of them have made of late to ſpread their abſurd notions through the country by means of the preſs. Our atheiſts and deiſts, of whom ſeveral travel-writers have made ſome mention, form no diſtinct body amongſt us, any more than amongſt other European nations: therefore I ſhall here ſink them into the maſs of that plurality which keeps ſteady to the tenets long embraced by their predeceſſors, and likely to be tranſmitted to their lateſt poſterity.

This

This little preamble naturally leads me to obſerve, that when a true Italian awakes in the morning, the firſt action he performs is that of croſſing himſelf and ſaying his prayers kneeling by his bed-ſide.

Theſe prayers conſiſt for the moſt part in a *pater noſter*, an *ave maria*, and an *angele dei*, with the addition of the ten commandments of God, and the five of the church.

As we are all brought up in the habit of ſaying theſe things by our mothers and nurſes, who make it a point every morning to repeat them loudly in our ears even before we can ſpeak, it may eaſily be believed, that there are few amongſt us who get rid of this habit when infancy is over, as we are farther confirmed in it for ſeveral years by our maſters at ſchool and by our catechiſts at church, who are inceſſantly recommending and inculcating to young people the indiſpenſible neceſſity of this duty.

Breakfaſt

Breakfaſt is with us different according to the age and condition of people. Young folks are ſeldom or never permitted to drink any thing hot in a morning, as is cuſtomary in England. They breakfaſt upon dry bread, or bread and cheeſe, or bread and fruit, ſuch as the ſeaſon affords; and are not permitted to taſte coffee and chocolate, which are uſed for breakfaſt by all our polite people of an adult age. A notion is univerſal amongſt us, that any thing hot in a morning ſpoils the teeth of young perſons, and enfeebles their conſtitution.

As to the generality of our peaſants and lower ſort of people, they breakfaſt on *polenta*, which is a ſort of pudding made with the flower of turkey-corn, on which while it is hot they ſpread ſome freſh butter, with the addition of ſome walnuts or a ſlice of cheeſe, if they can afford it. As for tea, our low people are ſtill unacquainted with it. Our ladies uſed formerly to drink a ſmall baſon of it when

when troubled with a cold: but in my late tour through ſeveral parts of Italy I have had occaſion to obſerve, that it comes into faſhion pretty faſt, eſpecially in our maritime towns: and ſeveral of our patriots have told me, with much political ſorrow, that the vanity of imitating *le miledi d'Ingkilterra*, was beginning to ſpoil our beſt ſignora's, and greatly increaſed the importation of this uſeleſs and coſtly drug.

The Italians are in general very early riſers, eſpecially in ſummer. A great many of them who have no country-houſes in which to ſpend that ſeaſon, go very often at ſun-riſe with their whole family to breakfaſt in the fields at ſome diſtance from the towns. There they carry cold meat, ſauſages, cheeſe, fruit, and wine, ſpread a napkin on the graſs near ſome brook or ſpring, and make a moſt chearful meal: then, before the ſun grows hot, get back home to attend their

buſineſs; and this morning exerciſe they think very wholeſome and very neceſſary, eſpecially to children. This cuſtom however only prevails among the middle ſort, and does not extend to the higher rank of people, who live in Italy pretty much after the manner of their equals in other civilized countries, and always breakfaſt at home, except ſometimes for a frolic when they are at their country-houſes.

In the Sardinian dominions, from the king down to the meaneſt artiſt, every body goes to his dinner at twelve o'clock: but in all other parts of Italy they dine two or three hours later. The place of diſtinction at table is the ſeat at the greateſt diſtance from the door at which the victuals are brought in; and this poſt is generally aſſigned to the oldeſt woman in company, or to an invited gueſt. All the reſt take up their places, men and women promiſcuouſly. The trouble of carving is not left to the ladies, as in England.

England. At common tables the men carve; and at great tables there is generally a ſervant out of livery, whoſe only buſineſs is to carve for the company. A common dinner begins with what is called in England a French ſoup, and ſtill oftener with a meſs either of rice, of macaroni's, or of legumes: then follow the boiled meats; then the roaſted; and laſt the cheeſe and fruit: nor is it cuſtomary ever to dine but in this order. As to our rich people, they have their French cooks as in England, and their dinners are nearly ſuch as thoſe of all the rich throughout Europe.

Our women in general drink moſtly water at their meals: but our men drink two or three large glaſſes of wine: and no health is drank to any body, preſent or abſent, except a foreigner is invited. In this caſe we drink healths once or twice, in compliance with an outlandiſh cuſtom, of which we are all appriſed; and uſe it

likewiſe at nuptial dinners in favour of the married couple.

As ſoon as dinner is over, every thing on the table is removed to make room, firſt for liquors, of which we have ſeveral ſorts of our own making, and then for coffee, which is brought when the ſervants have dined. In thoſe parts of Italy where the winter is very cold, fire is kept under the table while dinner laſts: and I remember the time when it was very common to have water in ſummer for every gueſt to keep his naked feet in, while dinner laſted: but this cuſtom is at preſent almoſt totally diſuſed.

In ſummer, almoſt every body after dinner goes to ſleep for an hour or two, either on an eaſy chair or a bed. For this reaſon we ſeldom dreſs before dinner, as they do in England; but eat in our banians and morning-gowns: and if we have dreſſed after breakfaſt, in order to go out, we undreſs, on purpoſe to be more

more eaſy at table: and here I muſt ſay again, that this cuſtom does not extend to our nobility and better ſort of people, who have long adopted the cuſtom of going to their dinner in full dreſs; which puts them to the inconvenience of dreſſing again when they do not abſtain from ſleeping after dinner.

In ſummer, when the ſun begins to decline, few people care to ſtay at home; but every one that can, women as well as men, go to walk till night, as many in company as poſſible for the convenience of chatting; and always where the great people reſort in their coaches: and this walking backwards and forwards uſually laſts till half an hour or an hour after ſun-ſet.

When the walk is over we go to ſupper, which always begins with ſome ſort of ſallad and ends with fruit. After ſupper we go out again to walk, except the nobility, who by this time have repaired

to ſome houſe where a *converſazione* is kept. Thoſe that go out after ſupper, ramble about the ſtreets, as many as can be got together, and enjoy the freſh air, liſtening to the ſinging and playing of thoſe who divert themſelves and others with either; and there are always a good many who do it in all our chief towns. Thus our ſtreets in ſummer are more frequented in the night than in the day-time. This ſort of diverſion is generally enjoyed till midnight, and by many till one or two in the morning: then theſe parties break up, and people go home, repeat the ſame prayers they ſaid in the morning, and go to bed.

Such is the uſual tenour of life in Italy. There are few Italians that care for amuſing themſelves with any kind of play in ſummer: but in winter they beguile their cold and long evenings with cards, and in moſt parts of eaſtern Italy with cheſs, backgammon, tric-trac, and other ſuch

games. Of theſe I ſhall not ſpeak here, becauſe they are known to the Engliſh as well as to us: but of thoſe card-games that are only in uſe amongſt us, I ſhall ſay ſomething in another place.

An Italian one degree above the vulgar, never ſits at table without having firſt refreſhed his hands, eſpecially in ſummer: and the water for this purpoſe is adminiſtred by a ſervant. Nor do we uſe water-glaſſes after our meals, as people do in England; but if any body chuſes to waſh his hands or mouth, he leaves the table, and goes to another part of the room.

As for our food, I have not many ſingularities to note, except that few Italians can endure beef at their tables. Many Engliſh miniſters reſiding at our courts, and many Engliſh gentlemen habituated in the country, finding the beef to their taſte in ſeveral parts of Italy, have kindly endeavoured to bring it into faſhion, and would perſuade us to eat it roaſted. Nay,

I remember a noble lord who had ſo much good-nature as to ſend for a butcher out of his own country, to teach the butchers of Turin the true way of cutting up an ox. Yet his endeavours proved vain, and he could not remove many from their fooliſh opinion that beef is groſs food, only fit for the vulgar, to whom they leave it freely, uſing only ſome of the choiceſt parts for bouilli: and the vulgar themſelves will not eat it roaſted, but boil or ſtew it, or bake it into pies highly ſeaſoned with pepper, garlick, onions, and other ſtrong ingredients.

Salt-beef we diſlike ſtill more than roaſt-beef; and no ſalted meat of any kind is ever brought to our polite tables, except ſauſages and tongues. Our chief meat is veal; and though in ſome places it is eat young, yet in general it is not uſed until ſix or ſeven months old. We have alſo pork, that is reckoned excellent by foreigners as well as by us; and fowls

of

of all ſorts in abundance, both tame and wild. We often eat kid and lamb; but rarely mutton, becauſe it is not very good throughout Italy, except that which comes from Savoy, Switzerland, and the higher parts of the Apennine. The low people eat the mutton that is bred in the flat parts of Italy; and if any body above the vulgar has a mind, for the ſake of variety, to a leg or a ſhoulder of it, it is never eaten but roaſted, and ſtuck all over with garlick, ſage, and roſemary before it goes to the ſpit or the oven. Nor are large joints of meat ſerved to our tables, except in large families that can conſume them in a day, becauſe in a country where the heat is conſiderable during many months, it cannot be cuſtomary to ſave victuals for to-morrow.

On meagre days, (the obſervation of which in my late viſit to Italy I found faſt declining) the ſea, the lakes, the rivers, and the numerous artificial ponds, furniſh the

the greateſt part of our towns with a great variety of fiſh, as the gardens and fields do of vegetables, which our cooks know how to dreſs in ſeveral and very palatable ways by the helps of butter, cheeſe, ſpices, anchovies, capers, and other ingredients, and eſpecially muſh-rooms and truffles, which many provinces of Italy afford in abundance, and of the moſt delicate kind. We eat beſides great quantities of dry and ſalt fiſh, which we get from abroad, and dreſs it in many ways not known in England, as far as my obſervations have gone.

We have not yet the uſe of potatoes. An Engliſh conſul in Venice cultivates them with good ſucceſs in his fine garden nor far from Meſtre, a place about five miles from Venice: bur few of his Italian gueſts will touch them. Such is the repugnance that the generality of mankind have for eating what they have not been early accuſtomed to eat, that an Engliſh captain who brought to Naples a large

cargo

cargo of potatoes during the late famine, was obliged to throw them overboard, as he could not even find people willing to take them for nothing. And yet we have ſeveral little nations, if I may ſo call them, along the ridge of the Apennines, who eat almoſt nothing elſe through a good part of the year but cheſnuts, of which they make even bread; and many poor peaſants in other parts, who eat almoſt nothing elſe but *polenta* inſtead of wheat-bread.

When the Italians have taken their afternoon naps in ſummer, their ſervants attend with lemonade, orgeate, ſherbet, and other cooling drinks that have been kept in ice. They drink plentifully of them not only then, but almoſt every hour of the day: nor do they ever want this refreſhment, becauſe great quantities of ice and ſnow are preſerved all over Italy for the hotter months. Should there ever be a ſcarcity of it any where, which happens but ſeldom, and in very few places,

places, people would lament it near as much as a famine: and at Venice, where it would be very difficult to have ice-houſes under ground becauſe of the water, ice is brought every ſummer-night from the continent; and there are laws by which the people who keep coffee-houſes are obliged to provide the town with ſo neceſſary a thing, as it would greatly diſtreſs the labouring people, if they could not cool their wine at meals, and quench their thirſt many times a day with frozen water.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

I ought to be a painter rather than a writer, in order to give a clear idea of the variety of dreſſes uſed in the ſeveral parts of Italy. However this variety appears more in the habits of the women than of the men; and that, of the women too of the lower rank. The men throughout Italy dreſs as in moſt parts of Europe, except the nobles of Venice and Genoa, whoſe habits are peculiar to themſelves, and to thoſe few amongſt their ſubjects in each town, who have the privilege of dreſſing like them.

The winter-dreſs of a Venetian noble, conſiſts of a long woolen black gown bordered with ermine, which he ties about his middle with a ſilver claſp: this gown has large hanging ſleeves. He wears likewiſe an enormous wig; but no hat or cap, though

though formerly a black cap was part of his dreſs. His ſummer-dreſs is likewiſe black, open, looſe, and ſhorter than that of the winter, with a ſilk-coat under it made after an old faſhion ſomewhat reſembling what is called a Vandyke-dreſs. The peculiar dreſs of his lady is alſo old-faſhioned, and made of black velvet.

The nobleman of Genoa dreſſes alſo in black, but after the modern manner, with a narrow ſilk cloak hanging down his back; nor is his wig ſo large as the Venetian's. He wears a plain hat, generally under his arm. His lady dreſſes often in colours; but her dreſs of ceremony is black ſilk or black velvet, according to the ſeaſon.

At Venice the inhabitants in general wear large grey cloaks, in ſummer of ſilk, and in winter of black ſilk lined with white pluſh, over their ordinary dreſs. The cloaks of the lower ſort are ſtuffs of any colour. Such at leaſt was the faſhion of cloaks when

when I was there laſt: but the Venetians do not ſtick long to a faſhion in point of cloaks. I remember the time when they were all of ſcarlet-cloth, and afterwards of fine camblet.

At Rome the better ſort of people, and even married men, dreſs for the greater part like abbots: and theſe are all the deviations from the common faſhion that I have obſerved in Italy amongſt men: but with regard to women, it is not eaſy to deſcribe their peculiar faſhions in different places, and give an idea of the Genoeſe *méſero*, and the divers ſorts of *zendádo's*, or head-dreſſes and veils uſed in other parts when they intend to be full-dreſſed. In ſome parts the women cover only their heads; in ſome their heads and ſhoulders; in ſome the whole upper part of their body; and ſome the whole body from head to foot: and there are places, where women cover their gowns from the waſte down with a black petticoat, as if they wanted

wanted to conceal the richneſs or the prettyneſs of their dreſs.

Gentlemen throughout Italy in the hot months dreſs in the thinneſt ſilks, and uſe velvet in winter, beſides cloth of all ſorts and colours, much laced or embroidered if they can afford it; for they love finery as well as the French. In winter likewiſe they line their coats with coſtly furs; wear large muffs; and in many parts adorn their hats with feathers when they are young. The men wear ſwords all over Italy, except at Venice, where the narrowneſs of the ſtreets and the gondola's would make it very inconvenient. Even ſtrangers at Venice leave their ſwords at home, and put on a cloak.

The pooreſt peaſants in many parts of Italy, wear neither hat, cap, cravat, ſtockings, nor ſhoes; nay in ſome of the ſouthernmoſt provinces they are ſatisfied with a groſs unbuttoned ſhirt and trowſers in ſummer, and a very ordinary coat in winter,

winter, but ſtill barelegged. Yet it is obſervable, that upon the whole they are much more large-bodied and better made than the Piedmonteſe, Lombards, and Venetians, who cloath themſelves much better. The Apulians and Calabreſe eſpecially, are ſpoken of as the fineſt race of men in Europe, taking the word *fine* in the ſenſe of painters, and not of young ladies.

With regard to our habitations, there are perhaps more ſtately houſes in Italy than in France and England taken together. Nevertheleſs I am of opinion that we are not lodged ſo comfortably as the Engliſh, nor are our houſes furniſhed with ſo much taſte, or abounding with ſo many conveniencies as theirs. It is true that we have in Italy ſome immenſe eſtates; but upon the whole the wealth of our nobility and gentry is not at all proportioned to their number, which is certainly too great. And I am not ſure, whether our having a great many people

of a high rank in life, determined by their birth and not by their fortunes, may not prevent the diffuſion of a general taſte for elegance and convenience through our country: for it happens in ſuch circumſtances, that if a ſuitable figure be kept up in one part of life, it muſt often be purchaſed by the ſacrifice of ſomething in another part; and the whole cannot be comfortably and reputably filled up ſo, as to furniſh an uniform ſtyle of accomodation.

This general ſituation has ſo much influence, even in caſes which do not ſtrictly come within this obſervation, that an Engliſh gentleman, put upon a par with a gentleman in Italy in point of income (due allowance made for the price of things in each country) will live much better than the Italian: the furniture of his houſe will coſt him as much as an Italian; ſo will his coach, the trappings of his horſes, and all other things: but ſtill he will have every thing more neatly done, more genteel, and much better contrived for uſe.

Here

Here an Engliſhman perhaps will obſerve, that the abundance of conveniencies in England ariſes from the ſuperiority of the Engliſh over the Italians in point of riches, as well as from their greater knowledge of life, and acquaintance with politeneſs. But I am not intirely of this opinion; and though I allow the Engliſh workmen to be generally better than ours, yet I will venture to aſſert, that the difference between the riches of the two nations is far from being ſo great as is fancied by many people in England, and even in Italy, where the notion prevails that the Engliſh are beyond all compariſon richer than the Italians.

To attempt a proof of my aſſertion would require a very long diſcuſſion, and lead me too far. But to cut the matter as ſhort as poſſible, let any body enquire into the incomes of our ſeveral governments, and he will find that the ſum total is not very ſhort

of the income of this nation, taken upon an average from the laſt year of the late war.

I am ſenſible that the greateſt part of my readers, inſtead of giving themſelves this trouble, will laugh at me for offering ſo much upon this ſubject; thoſe in particular, who know no more of Italy than what has been ſaid in print by ſeveral of their travellers; and chiefly by Mr. Sharp, who has ſpoken ſo wiſely and ſo diffuſely of the *poverty*, the *wretchedneſs*, the *unhappineſs*, the *miſerable ſtate*, and the *deplorable condition* of the Italians. But this is to rail and declaim, and not to reaſon. I know that any body who has eyes, and will make uſe of them, may ſee every where in Italy fine houſes, fine coaches, fine horſes, and fine liveries: I know that there are a number of gentlemen richly dreſſed, and of ladies ſparkling with gold and jewels: I know that many nations of Italy, eſpecially in the northern and weſtern parts, are ſo far from being rigid economiſts, that ſtrangers in

general charge them with epicureiſm, becauſe they will have even a diſguſting variety of diſhes on their tables. I know that our numerous ſea-ports are full of ſhipping: I know that almoſt all our towns have large and fine theatres, all much frequented; and many temples even ſuperiour to the moſt famous of ancient Greece and Rome: I know that our public ſhows are in many places very coſtly, and ſome much finer than that of an Engliſh Lord Mayor's. I know that when a foreign king, queen, or great prince comes to Italy, they meet in ſome parts of it with grander entertainments than any where in Europe: I know beſides, that Italy is not only fertile, but that it produces upon the whole more rich commodities than any other country in Europe of equal extent; and I know in fine that the ballance of commerce upon a general average is greatly in its favour. And knowing all this, in conſequence of the many careful obſervations that I have made there

for a conſiderable ſpace of time, and of the many informations I have procured, how is it poſſible to help a movement of contempt or pity againſt ſuch as having peruſed no other writer upon Italy than Mr. Sharp, borrow all their notions from him, and form a judgement of that country upon his miſrepreſentations?

It is true on the other hand, that, beſides many diſadvantages we have when compared to the Engliſh, many ſpots in our country are little leſs than barren, or not cultivated as they might be. But are all tracts of lands, ſo large as Italy, quite fertile, or quite well cultivated any where in the world? I am ſure this is not the caſe of Great Britain, where even in the ſouthern parts I have ſeen vaſt tracts of deſart; and in the northern I am told, that a very great proportion of the country is quite wild and barren.

It is likewiſe true, that there are in our churches many ſilver-lamps and ſilver-candle-

dleſticks, which, according to Mr. Sharp, it were better to ſend to the mint, and thus enlarge our commerce. But theſe ſages who adviſe all nations to throw their uſeleſs ſilver into the great ocean of commerce, why do they not ſend to the mint thoſe many ſilver baubles that adorn their ſide-boards? Yet Mr. Sharp's notion is miſerable and childiſh; for it is by quite different methods that commerce is ſupported and flouriſhes.

But if Italy is near ſo rich as England, how does it happen, that the Engliſh nation is ſo renowned all over the world for its power, which is the natural conſequence of its riches, and how does it happen, that the Italian makes no figure at all either in Europe or any where elſe?

To this queſtion I cannot give any anſwer, until I ſee all Italy, or even the greater part of it, under a ſingle government, either free or ſlaviſh, no matter which; and until then, Mr. Sharp is very

welcome to call the few frigates and gallies of the Pope and the king of Naples *Liliputian fleets*; to ſay ſay that the king of Sardinia *ſells the graſs that is cut in one of his gardens*, though the graſs-plots there are not altogether as large as South-Audley-Square; and a thouſand ſuch other impertinencies no leſs nauſeous to read than to relate.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

THE man would certainly appear extraordinary, if not ridiculous, who ſhould attempt to appreciate the different degrees of mental power poſſeſſed by the chief European nations, when conſidered as bodies oppoſed to bodies, and endeavour to form his eſtimate, either by drawing inferences from thoſe portions of wit that they muſt neceſſarily employ when they play at their national games of cards, and from thoſe reſources of genius that muſt have been poſſeſſed by thoſe amongſt their reſpective predeceſſors, who firſt invented thoſe games.

Forbearing therefore to enter into this ſubtle and odd diſquiſition, I will only obſerve, that it is not without reaſon the Engliſh are proud of their *whiſt*, the French

French of their *piquet*, and the Spaniards of their *ombre* *, which, as I take it, are the three beſt games of cards amongſt the ſeveral that their nations poſſeſs. To obtain a victory or to hinder a defeat at any of theſe games, requires ſo much quickneſs and dexterity of mind, that I do not wonder if even men of good parts are flattered when they are praiſed for this accompliſhment.

Which of theſe three games required the greater effort in the invention, or demands moſt ſkill in the management, I will not take upon me to determine: but I think myſelf well intitled to ſay, that three or four of our Italian games of cards are almoſt as ſuperiour in both reſpects to whiſt, to piquet, and to ombre, as cheſs is ſuperiour to poliſh-drafts. The games I mean, are thoſe which we form out of

* It ought to be ſpelled *hombre*, which in Spaniſh ſignifies a *man*.

thoſe cards called *Minchiate* and *Tarrocco*'s; the firſt chiefly in vogue all over Tuſcany and the Pope's dominions; the ſecond in Piedmont and Lombardy. I crave the reader's indulgence for endeavouring to give him ſome idea of both theſe games, juſt to make him ſenſible, that the Italians, who have often appeared great in the arts conſidered by mankind as great, are likewiſe great in thoſe that mankind will regard as little.

Both the minchiate and the tarrocco's conſiſt of five ſuits inſtead of four, as common cards do. Four of thoſe five ſuits anſwer exactly to the four of the common cards, with only the addition of one card to the three that are figured in each ſuit; ſo that, inſtead of king, queen, and knave, we have king, queen, horſeman, and knave, both in the minchiate and the tarrocco's. As to the fifth ſuit, it conſiſts of forty-one cards in the minchiate, and of twenty-two in the tarrocco's;

and

and this fifth ſuit in both games is called by a name that anſwers to *trumps* in Engliſh. Both games may be played by only two, or only three people in ſeveral ways; but the moſt ingenious as well as the moſt in uſe, are two or three games that are played by four people; and more eſpecially one which is played by one againſt three, much after the ruling principle of ombre, and another played two againſt two, not unlike whiſt.

By this account the reader will ſoon comprehend, that each of thoſe games muſt neceſſarily be much ſuperiour to whiſt and ombre, becauſe of the greater number of combinations produced either by the ninety-ſeven cards of the minchiate, or by the ſeventy-eight of tarrocco; which combinations cannot but give a larger ſcope to the imagination of the player than the leſſer number ariſing from the forty of ombre, or the fifty-two of whiſt, and oblige him to exert his memory and judgment

judgment much more than either at whiſt, ombre, or piquet.

I have heard ſtrangers, unable to comprehend any of theſe our games, object both to the tarrocco's and the minchiate, that they cannot be ſo diverting as the three mentioned, becauſe they produce ſo many combinations as muſt prove too fatiguing. But if this argument carries conviction, we muſt of courſe conclude, that cheſs is leſs delightful than loo, becauſe it forces the mind to a greater recollection of its powers than loo. This reaſoning is certainly juſt with regard to little and ſluggiſh minds; but will not hold with reſpect to thoſe that are lively and comprehenſive. However, thoſe Italians, whoſe minds are much too contracted and diſproportioned to the tarrocco's and the minchiate, or thoſe who do not chuſe to exert thir talents too much, have ſtill the means of diverting themſelves with ſeveral other games at cards

that

that require no greater compaſs of imagination, memory and underſtanding, than whiſt, piquet, and ombre: and other ſtill, that are upon a pretty equal footing with humble loo itſelf.

Let me add an obſervation more upon this ſubject. Many ſtrangers are ſurpriſed that the Italians learn their games eaſily, and in a very little time play at them with as much ſkill as the beſt players among themſelves. Hence they infer very kindly, that Italy abounds in gamblers more than their own reſpective countries. But is this inference very logical? I apprehend they would ſay better, if they would be pleaſed to ſay, that the Italians, accuſtomed to more complicated games, can eaſily deſcend to play thoſe, which, comparatively ſpeaking, require leſs wit and leſs attention.

N. B. I have not wrote this ſhort chapter for the peruſal of thoſe who make it a point to contemn all frivolous amuſements,

and look upon themſelves with great reverence becauſe they always deteſted gaming. I intend it only for thoſe connoiſſeurs in ingenuity, who know that cards have not only the power of reſcuing the ordinary part of mankind from the torpid encroachments of dulneſs, but of affording alſo an efficacious refreſhment even to the thinker, after a long run of deep meditation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THE Italians are no great hunters on horſeback, and have not the cuſtom of running after the fox, as many people do in England. Perhaps our winters are too cold and our ſummers too hot for ſuch paſtimes, or perhaps our plains are too narrow, our mountains too high and rugged, and our rivers too rapid and frequent for this diverſion. Yet ſeveral of our ſovereigns have their hunting ſeats, and follow ſometimes the violent exerciſe of purſuing the ſtag and the wild boar, and even the wolf. But this is no part of our national character, and in general we do not love ſuch dangerous exerciſes. We are fonder of fowling and laying ſnares for the feathered kind; and as to the arts of catching birds, there is perhaps no nation in Europe ſo dexterous as the Italians, who,

who, among other inventions for this purpoſe, have that of the *Róccolo*, a ſhort account of which I hope will not prove unacceptable.

A Róccolo is a circular ſpot of ground, generally on an eminence, and at ſome diſtance from any wood. This ſpot is planted with middle-ſized trees in a circular diſpoſition. The diameter of the circle about thirty or forty feet. Theſe trees, which muſt not be very buſhy, are covered on one ſide with a net that is left upon them as long as the ſporting-time laſts. The area within the circle is likewiſe planted with trees much lower than the hedge round, and has in its center a green and buſhy hut that contains many cages full of thruſhes, finches, and ſuch kind of ſmall birds. A yard or two from thoſe cages an owl is placed, that has been long uſed before-hand to eat his food perching on a ſhort pole, the upper extremity of which is formed into a kind of ſmall cuſhion, ſtuffed with rags or ſtraw.

On one ſide of the circular hedge a tower is built about twenty feet high, the brickwork of which is well concealed by the branches and leaves of vines, ivy, and other creeping plants.

At the ſeaſon in which birds are on their paſſage to other countries and regions, the *Roccoliſta*; that is, the man who owns a Róccolo, aſcends the tower from within by a ſtair-caſe or a ladder two or three hours before the riſing of the ſun. At the top of the tower there is a ſmall room for him to ſtand; and from the window there, he keeps a good look-out towards that part of the horizon from which the birds come. As ſoon as he ſpies or hears any, he gives a pull to a long ſtring that he has faſtened before to the leg of the owl in the green hut below. The owl thus ſuddenly pulled, falls to the ground from the pole or cuſhion on which he was reſting, but preſently hops upon it again. However the moment he falls he is perceived by

by the birds in the cage, who give a ſudden cry; and, ſportſmen ſay they do it for joy, pretending that all birds rejoice at the ſight of the owl. The cry is heard by the birds in the air; and as many as there are, they all plunge precipitately in the Róccolo, as if wanting to ſee what is the matter. The Roccoliſta, who knows what will be the conſequence of the cry made by his little priſoners in the cages, ſtands ready with many ſhort pieces of wood by his ſide, to fling them at the flying birds. Theſe pieces of wood, by the help of ſome wicker-work on two ſides, groſsly reſemble a kite when on the wing. As ſoon as the birds are near a-ground within the area, without giving them time to light on the green hut, or the branches and buſhes there, he throws as quick as he can ſeveral of his falſe kites over their heads, and thus frightens the poor things; who endeavouring to eſcape the mock enemy through the circular trees, run di-

rectly into the net that covers them; and thus they are caught in great numbers every morning, ſometimes even a thouſand and more, if their paſſage is numerous and the Róccolo in a favourable ſituation for ſuch a paſſage: nor does the Roccoliſta deſcend from the tower until the air grows ſo hot as to reſtrain the birds from their flight, and force them to ſeek for ſhelter. The leaſt noiſe in a Róccolo would make the birds keep at a great diſtance; therefore the Roccoliſta keeps there quite ſtill and ſilent, only whiſtling from time to time through ſeveral tin-whiſtles hanging at his neck, by means of which he mimics with great exactneſs the chirping of ſeveral birds. All birds lie very ſtill when they feel themſelves entangled in a net, except the kite, who is often caught himſelf in a Róccolo when too eager in purſuing the ſmall birds. A kite, as ſoon as fallen in, ſqueaks as loud as he can: but there is always

always a man attending theRoccoliſta,who keeps ſilently below the tower; ready to run and wring the neck of the noiſy kite.

This ſort of bird-catching is much followed all over Lombardy and in the Venetian territories: but I cannot ſay whether it is common or not in other parts of Italy. I only know that in Piedmont it is not at all practiſed, though the country abounds in ſeveral places with ſmall birds of every kind.

Beſides the Róccolo and the common way of laying nets, or the going about a ſhooting with a fowling-piece, we have divers other ways of catching birds. One, which I may poſſibly call peculiar to us, is that uſed on thoſe of our lakes which abound with birds of the web-footed kind. There in the proper ſeaſon a hundred light boats, or more if the width of the lake requires it, are provided. Each of theſe boats, beſides the rower,

contains a ſportſman, who has by his ſide a number of hand-guns ready loaded. The boats ſtart all at once in a line from one ſide of the lake, and make towards the other where the game is flown at the ſight of ſo many boats and people. As the boats approach, the frighted birds riſe all in a cloud to a certain hight, and fly towards the oppoſite ſide of the lake, whence the ſportſmen ſtarted; and as they are paſſing over-head, each ſportſman diſcharges his pieces at them as faſt as he can, and makes many birds fall into the water, and often into the boats. As this ſort of chace is no leſs noiſy than pleaſant, there are many ladies who partake of it, and prove very good ſportſwomen not at all afraid of a gun. When the ſport is over, the dead fowls are collected and divided amongſt the ſportſmen.

On the laguna's about Venice they have likewiſe another very odd way of killing quantities of the palmipedous birds that

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are there in great plenty. Several empty and uncovered tubs are ſunk in ſhallows within two or three inches of the brim, and placed at proper diſtance from each other. Many ſportſmen, well provided with hand-guns ready loaded, and cartridges to load again in caſe of neceſſity, go in boats to thoſe tubs before break of day; get into them, and ſend the boats away. As ſoon as the day-light approaches, the birds fly all about in ſearch of their food. The ſportſmen who ſtand peeping at the brim of their tubs, ſhoot at all thoſe that come within reach. The ſport laſts a good part of the morning; and when it is over, the boatmen come to fetch the ſportſmen out of the tubs; row about collecting the dead floating birds; then all go merrily together to land, where the game is fairly divided.

I might deſcribe not a few other methods uſed in Italy towards making prey

of all kind of birds, could I recollect any quite ſo ſingular as theſe already mentioned: and I might alſo take notice of our various ways of making war upon the inhabitants of the water, had I ever delighted in this other kind of ſport. But though I have heard much to this purpoſe when I was young, yet a courſe of years and long abſence have nearly defaced all my knowledge on ſuch particulars.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

THE better ſort of people among the Italians, like the people of the ſame rank in moſt modern nations, are not in general very fond of procuring themſelves pleaſure by means of violent exerciſe. However, it is otherwiſe with the common people; and the mentioning a few of their diverſions which approach neareſt to the ancient paleſtrical games, together with a ſuccinct account of ſome barbarous paſtimes which are in uſe in ſeveral parts of Italy, will poſſibly not be thought improper, as tending to give a little more complete idea of the manners of that country.

One of the moſt univerſal diverſions among us, and which I believe peculiar to Italy, is that of the *Pallone*. A Pallone is a leather-ball filled with air, and about as big as a man's head. The number of thoſe

thoſe that play at the Pallone are generally twelve; that is, ſix againſt ſix. No man is reckoned a good player, who cannot throw the ball at leaſt to a hundred yards diſtance at the firſt blow. They ſtrike it with a wooden inſtrument called *Bracciale*, which with regard to its form, bears ſome reſemblance to a muff, and is covered all over with ſhort wooden ſpikes cut in the ſhape of a diamond.

Into this inſtrument the player introduces his hand and arm almoſt up to the elbow, and firmly graſps a peg fixed acroſs in the inward part of the Bracciale. Thus armed, and lightly clad, and each player previouſly poſted at a proper diſtance from each other, ſix againſt ſix as I ſaid, they fall to it with great alertneſs, and ſtrike the Pallone backwards and forwards with as much ſtrength and dexterity as they can whenever it comes in their way, or run to it when it is at a diſtance, all endeavouring to make it ultimately fall far from themſelves, and into the ground occupied

cupied by their antagoniſts; very much upon the plan of tennis-ball, ſuppoſing it played by many players.

This game, which cannot be played but in ſpacious places, and moſt conveniently by the ſide of ſome high wall or long range of buildings, is very common in ſummer, towards the latter part of the afternoon, in almoſt all our towns and villages: and it is uſual all over Italy for the players of one place, to ſend challenges to thoſe of another, (ſometimes at the diſtance of a hundred miles and more) and invite them to try their ſkill at it for a ſtated ſum of money: on which occaſions eſpecially, great crouds of people reſort to ſee them play; nor are gentlemen and people of rank averſe to be ſometimes in the number of the players.

Anton-maria Salvini has given a full detail in print of another Italian game of the gymnaſtic kind, called *Calcio*, which is likewiſe played with *pallone*'s and *bracciale*'s by two numerous and parti-coloured bands

bands of antagoniſts. To Salvini's work I refer the reader for the gratification of his curioſity about this game, of which a ſufficient idea may be formed by *only* caſting a look on the plate prefixed by that learned man to his deſcription; and I will only add, that this *Calcio* is peculiar to the Tuſcans; nay, almoſt limited to the Florentines, who ſtill exhibit it only on occaſion of ſome extraordinary public rejoicing.

My curioſity carried me once in my youth to viſit Scandiano *, the birth-place of Bojardo, who amongſt our poets was, in my opinion, the moſt richly endowed with the rare gift of invention. There I

* A poor town in the duke of Modena's dominions, but a place of ſome conſideration in Bojardo's time, as it was then the chief place of a ſmall abſolute ſovereignty, deſcended to this poet by a long ſeries of anceſtors, who called themſelves counts of Scandiano.

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ſaw a game of ſo ſingular a kind, that I cannot paſs it over unnoticed.

During the months of April and May, they have a cuſtom there, and in many of the neighbouring places (as I was informed) to peel off the bark of a high poplar-tree, and ſtrip it of all its branches in ſuch a manner, as to make the trunk perfectly ſmooth.

When the tree is thus prepared, they hang on the top of it a certain quantity of hams, fowls, and other eatables, which are not to be got but by clambering up that trunk. The muſt vigorous amongſt the unmarried peaſants of the territory embrace the trunk courageouſly, and one at a time, as they are drawn by lot: and helping themſelves by faſtening a rope round the tree as they aſcend, alternately tying and untying it, they endeavour to get at the deſired premium. But the greateſt part of them (ſome from a greater, ſome from a leſſer height) are ſucceſſively born down, and, for want of ſufficient

ſtrength

ſtrength and dexterity, ſlide down with great velocity to the ground, to the no ſmall merriment of the numerous ſpectators of both ſexes: and he who is ſo robuſt and ſkilful as to reach the top of the tree, and throw down the eatables, not only has them to himſelf, but inſtantly becomes ſo great a favourite with the pretty maidens round the country, that happy ſhe whom he deigns to pay his addreſſes to, and deſire in marriage.

I have likewiſe ſeen in ſome parts of Piedmont the young peaſants ſtand erect in their carts drawn by oxen intoxicated with wine. The drunken animals, as it may well be imagined, run at a prodigious rate as ſoon as they are let looſe, pricked, and frightened by the repeated ſhoutings and hideous clamour of a numerous rabble. The carts are often drawn out of the road, over uneven ground, and not ſeldom overturned into ditches and other hollow places, to the great danger of the fellows that ride in them, who thus madly

madly expoſe their limbs and life. Yet the vanity of appearing ſuperior to one's neighbour, operates alike in the human heart, whether ruſtic or civilized; and the deſire of acquiring diſtinction, as well as the certainty, in caſe of good ſucceſs, of becoming conſiderable in the eyes of their ſweethearts, makes the young peaſants of Piedmont venture upon ſo perilous an exploit with the greateſt intrepidity and alacrity.

In Piedmont likewiſe I have in my early days been many times a ſpectator of the *battajola*, as they call it; that is, of a battle which was then regularly fought on every holiday in the afternoon, between many of the inhabitants of one part of Turin againſt thoſe of another part; the numbers of each ſide always increaſed by the country-people. The place of action was under the very walls of Turin, on the ſide of the river Po, which runs by it. There the parties, which

which ſometimes amounted to ſome thouſands, flung ſtones at each other with ſlings during many hours with inexpreſſible heat and fury; each party endeavouring to put the oppoſite to flight, and make priſoners, whom they ſhaved immediately when taken all over the head, and otherwiſe much inſulted before they diſmiſſed them. The battajola was uſually begun by boys on both ſides; but ordinarily ended by grown men, who were gradually fired at the ſight of the combat, and by the yielding of the boys on one ſide when overpowered by their opponents. Many were the heads broken on ſuch occaſions, and ſcarcely a holiday paſſed without ſome boy or man being killed. However, this ancient cuſtom was at laſt aboliſhed in a great meaſure when this preſent king was married to his third wife; for it happened that the new queen, deſirous of ſeeing the battajola, went with a great retinue to view it from the high wall of the gar-

den which belongs to the royal palace, chuſing a place there that was thought out of the reach of a ſling. Yet ſo it happened that one of the ſlingſmen had the inſolence to fling a ſtone where ſhe was, and one of her ladies was hit by it; which made the king reſolve to put an end to this brutal diverſion by a moſt rigid proclamation, and by ſending ſoldiers to diſperſe the rabble as ſoon as they prepared to aſſemble; ſo that at preſent the battajola conſiſts only of a few daring boys, who go to fight at a much greater diſtance of the town than they uſed to do before that accident happened.

Nor are theſe the only perilous diverſions practiſed in Italy. Thoſe who delight in viewing prints, may poſſibly recollect the having ſeen one done by a famous maſter, (I have now forgot his name) which is commonly called *Il ponte di Piſa (the bridge of Piſa)* as it repreſents a kind of battle that uſed often to be

fought on the bridge of that town by two parties, the combatants all clad in iron-armour, with iron-helmets on their heads, and furiouſly wielding heavy clubs in order to get poſſeſſion of the bridge. Many in the ſcuffle had their heads and limbs broke, in ſpight of their helmets and armour, and many more were beaten or puſhed head-long into the Arno beneath. It is true that thoſe who thus fell, were immediately taken out of the water by the boatment poſted in the river for this purpoſe: but as too many lives were loſt every year at this terrible diverſion, the government has in my time put a ſtop to it, and only a few boys are ſuffered ſometimes to fight with their fiſts for the conqueſt of the bridge; a thing which is alſo very cuſtomary in Venice. It is obſervable that in the print above mentioned, the combatants are repreſented naked, though in truth they fought completely armed.

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In many parts of the Romagna and the Marca, the practice of bull-baiting is much followed; and in my late visit to Ancona, I saw a very showy kind of amphitheatre erected on purpose in the market-place for the exhibiting of this diversion in carnival-time, where numbers of spectators may conveniently sit and see the bulls, several of whom afford good sport to those who are pleased with such diversions, by tossing many Corsican dogs, which are reckoned the fiercest we have in Italy.

Nor are we totally without horse-races; though, to say the truth, such as are customary in divers of our towns, cannot but appear childish and ridiculous when compared to those of Newmarket, because our horses are every where, but in Asti*, made run without riders, and generally along one of the longest streets. Yet it is not unpleasant to see the spirit of our horses on such occasions, and with what emula-

* A town about twenty miles distant from Turin.

tion they ſtrive to out-run each other, each appearing deſirous to gain the prize for his owner; which prize uſually conſiſts in a piece of velvet or ſcarlet *cloth*. At theſe races bets are often laid on this and that horſe: yet never with that univerſal eagerneſs which is ſo obſervable at the Engliſh races.

But one of the moſt remarkable among our public diverſions, is that of the *regatta* at Venice, where on particular days the gondoliers ſtrive to out-row each other on their grand canal, or about the Laguna. When the town is viſited by any royal perſonage, a regatta is commonly one of the paſtimes given by the republic: and the emulous rowers are on ſuch occaſions accompanied from their ſtarting-place to the end of their courſe by many barks magnificently equipped, repreſenting the cars of Apollo, Venus, Neptune, and other deities, or ſome other ſhowy and fanciful object: ſo that on ſuch occaſions Venice ſeems a town contrived by magic; as many

Engliſh

Engliſh gentlemen ſaid when they ſaw the regatta that was exhibited not many years ago to honour and divert one of their princes.

Many more are thoſe of our public exerciſes, which require either dexterity, or ſtrength, or both: but moſt of them have been deſcribed by travellers who have undertaken to write upon Italy; and of theſe, many are neither intereſting nor ſingular, as for inſtance, tennis-ball, pall-mall, or billiards; and many are not known to me ſo well as to warrant a particular deſcription. I ſhall therefore conclude this chapter with this ſingle obſervation; that Mr. Sharp, who profeſſes to give a ſtriking picture of Italian manners and cuſtoms, has almoſt intirely omitted to take notice of our paſtimes and diverſions, public as well as private; and not ſaid a ſingle word about thoſe Italian games and exerciſes that require great ſtrength and great dexterity; ſo that his book may eaſily betray his reader into the erroneous

belief that the whole Italian nation is utterly deſtitute of ſuch exerciſes and games, and has almoſt no other public ſhows and public amuſements, ſave thoſe that are dependant on the ſuperſtitious practices of their religion, ſeveral of which he has deſcribed with a moſt invidious prolixity: and I leave it even to his admirers, if he has any, to judge whether his method is very proper to convey juſt ideas of any people, whoſe character for manlineſs or effeminacy depends in a good meaſure on forbearing or practiſing thoſe games and exerciſes, which call neceſſarily forth the powers of the mind, as well as thoſe of the body.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

WHEN I firſt mentioned the morning prayers uſed by the Italians, I had ſome intention of giving an account of the manner in which the greateſt part of them acquit themſelves of thoſe duties which are impoſed upon them by their religion: but that thought ſlipped then in a manner through my fingers, and I went on talking about their breakfaſts, their dinners, and other things, nor could recollect myſelf until I got a little too far from my mark. Let me do here what I ought to have have done in that place.

The Italians, like the Engliſh, are not very fond of going to church on working days: yet there are ſome perſons, women eſpecially, who will have their maſs every morning, and their benediction every evening, particularly if there is a church

in their neighbourhood, where they may have both without any great inconvenience.

Many of my readers know very well what maſſes and benedictions are, or may eaſily know, either by aſking their parſon, or by only ſtepping into one of our popiſh chapels here in London at the proper hours; therefore I ſhall ſpare myſelf the trouble of deſcribing them: but going on with the thread of my ſtory, I ſay that our churches, which are almoſt empty on working days, are generally full on holidays, particularly in the morning.

Every body has heard or read ſomething of the churches of Italy; how fine many of them are; and how pompouſly adorned. On holidays, and before break of day, their bells are in motion, and the lower kind of people then haſten to hear the maſs. As every church has, at leaſt, three altars, and our prieſts and friars are many, ſo there are in all churches as many maſſes

maſſes to be heard as one chuſes, which are continued from the very firſt appearance of the morn till a little after noon.

About the middle of the morning the genteel people begin to make their appearance at church, the ladies attended by their ſervants and cicisbeo's, if they have any. A cicisbeo who goes to church with his lady, on their approach to the church-door, ſteps forward to hold up the curtain to her, and goes to the holy water, in which he dips the extremity of his middle finger, and offers it to her, that ſhe may croſs herſelf with it; which ſhe does immediately, not forgetting to return thanks with half a curteſy.

We have no pews in our churches; but only benches or chairs, that are fit both for kneeling and ſitting. In thoſe churches where there are only chairs, their ſervants or the ſexton reaches one to any lady or gentleman. But in thoſe churches where there are only benches, a lady haſtens

where

where ſhe ſees a vacant place, or, if all the benches are occupied, where any man is placed. A man on the approach of a woman, though but tolerably dreſſed, and no matter her age, preſently riſes off the bench, and gives up his place to her. She kneels for a moment; croſſes herſelf; mumbles a ſhort prayer, (generally an *ave maria*); and if there is no maſs ready at any of the altars, ſits down till one begins. But if there is one juſt beginning, ſhe continues kneeling until it is a little advanced; then ſits; and kneels no more while it laſts, except when ſhe hears the little bell that is rung when the prieſt elevates the hoſt. Her kneeling at *this* time is accompanied with an air of recollection, and a very humble attitude.

When that maſs is over to which ſhe has turned her face, ſhe ſtill ſits a while: then kneels again; mutters another *ave maria*, or any other ſhort prayer; croſſes herſelf; takes up the prayer-book in which ſhe has been reading during the greateſt part

part of the maſs; gives it to her ſervant or ciciſbeo; or puts it in her pocket; takes up her fan that was laid on the bench; croſſes herſelf again; curtſies to the great altar; goes to the holy water, which when ſhe has any gentleman in her company is given her, or takes it herſelf if ſhe has none; croſſes herſelf again; curteſies again to the great altar, as alſo to any body of her acquaintance whom ſhe ſees looking at her; and then walks out of the church if ſhe has no farther buſineſs there; that is, if ſhe does not go to the confeſſional, where good ladies make it generally a rule to go once a month.

With regard to the men, at church they generally ſtand, eſpecially the young and gay; and only bend a little the right knee and incline the head at the elevation of the hoſt: and what is ſtill leſs exemplary, they whiſper often in each other's ears, and point at the fair that come in and go out; for which they are upraided in due time by the lent-preachers, who tell them

them of the ſcandal they give by ſuch a prepoſterous conduct, and of the great decency obſervedby Heretics and Turks in their acts of devotion.

Though our churches are many, as alſo the maſſes celebrated in them, yet ſome of them are wonderfully crouded on a holiday in the morning, becauſe (contrary to what is done in England) no body abſtains from going to church on a holiday, not even thoſe who make nothing of religion, as it is one of the ſettled ways of filling up time. In all our great towns there are always two, three, or more churches, which we call *alla moda, (faſhionable)*, in which you are always ſure towards noon to ſee the beſt company.

I have taken notice that the people in France are very fond of veſpers in the afternoon; but my countrymen do not love veſpers. They croud in the evening at the benediction, which is rendered a glorious ſight by a vaſt illumination; by the

the ſolemnity of ſome ſhort prayers ſung before it; and by the great concourſe of ladies that reſort to it. This laſt is an incitement not to be paſſed unnoticed, as the Italians never care for going to any place that is not viſited by the ſex. And our prieſts and friars know very well how to fill their churches with ladies by a benediction, giving them ſome piece of fine muſic, and contriving to have it when they return from their evening walk and haſte to their ſupper, or *converſazione*'s, or to the opera and the play. Prieſts and friars get ſomething by thus filling a church, as they have always one or two fellows, who go about the church collecting alms and preſenting a bag faſtened at the end of a long pole to every body within the diſtance of it.

Some of our great people are but ſeldom ſeen at church, becauſe they have their chapels at home. This privilege they eaſily obtain from Rome by means of a ſmall ſum of money: and when they have

a chapel, they ſoon find ſome poor prieſt who for a few pence will come to give them a maſs any morning they chuſe, and without putting them to the expence of a domeſtic chaplain.

This is the general manner of ſpending a holiday in Italy with reſpect to the religious duties that attend it: and I am pretty ſure that my account of it will give my reader no great opinion of Italian devotion. However, let him not forget that thoſe who ſtrictly adhere to the rules of Chriſtianity, are but few any where, and that every where there are alſo thoſe who make it a point to perform all acts of religion with the greateſt attention and ſincerity. Whoever paints the manners of the plurality of any country, has at beſt but a poor picture to paint.

Italy, by ſuperficial and prejudiced foreigners, is generally deſcribed as a land overflowing with the moſt abſurd ſuperſtition: but though ſeveral of our religious rites and ceremonies may perhaps deſerve this

this cenſure, yet I could almoſt wiſh that the better ſort of my countrymen would turn a little ſuperſtitious, rather than behave with ſo much airineſs and cavalierneſs whenever they reſort to a holy place.

There is no need of obſerving that this account regards only what is called the polite part of the nation. As to the low people and and the peaſantry, I have already ſaid that they are in general ſtrict followers of ſuch modes of religion as are preſcribed them by their eccleſiaſtical ſuperiors; and the reader has already ſeen them preceding a Madona of wood or a Saint of paſteboard, devoutly ſinging with a wax-candle in their hands, and hanging votive pictures, ſilver hearts, and wooden limbs to the altars of thoſe ſuppoſed inhabitants of heaven, by whom they fancy they have been aſſiſted in their neceſſities, cured of their diſtempers, or delivered from ſome danger. Mr. Sharp inſiſts, with great rage, that they are abſolute idolaters

for

for ſo doing; but I am pretty ſure *that* the poor ſimpletons mean well, and will not with their idolatry make heaven ſo very angry as they have made that *gentle*-man.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVII.

AFTER having ſaid ſo much of the nature, manners, and cuſtoms of my countrymen, it will not be amiſs to beſtow a chapter or two on the land they inhabit, its climate, its productions, and its animals. But the reader has ſeen enough of my plan, not to ſuppoſe that I mean a regular piece of natural hiſtory. I mean only a view of Italy in ſuch a light as correſponds with the reſt of the deſign.

And firſt with regard to the climate, many of my Engliſh friends have often made me ſmile on a cold day, by aſking whether we had any ſuch cold in Italy? Indeed the winter is much more ſevere in our northern and weſtern parts, than in London and the counties round it. In Turin, and Milan eſpecially, and of courſe

in the intermediate country, I have ſeen many times the ground covered with a deep ſnow for two months together, and longer. Nothing is then to be ſeen in our ſtreets but men wrapped up to the noſe in their great coats, and women hiding their faces in their muffs. Our houſes at this time have an additional caſement on the outſide of their windows, and thick curtains are hung at the doors of our churches. No verdure then of any ſort. The naked trees are all made white by the froſt. The ſmaller rivers and brooks full of ice, and ſome of them quite frozen. Not an inſect is to be ſeen; and no birds, but clouds of ſparrows and of crows. The whole land in fine is nothing then but a vaſt hoary deſert, circled round by an immenſe chain of hoary mountains: and yet the people are never ſo chearful as during the continuance of this ſort of weather: for then the towns abound more with diverſions than in the

better ſeaſon. The rich amuſe themſelves with plays, opera's, aſſemblies, balls, concerts, maſcarades, long dinners, and long ſuppers; while large diſtributions of food and drink at the gates of palaces and convents comfort the poor. And as to the country, the peaſants croud in their ſtables with their cows and oxen, and there ſing, dance, tell ſtories, work, and make love; regularly viſited by their parſons, who go often to aſſiſt in eating the *polenta* *; and favoured likewiſe with the company of the elderly gentlewomen in their neighbourhood, who not ſeldom condeſcend to paſs the evening with them, giving good advice to the maidens, and helping them to ſpin a diſtaff or two.

A thaw at laſt puts an end to this mixed ſcene of rigour and comfort, and in a few days the face of things is intirely changed. Spring advances with great rapidity in the

* I have already ſaid, that the polenta is a kind of pudding made with the flower of turkey-corn.

Italian climate; and a vivid carpet is almoſt immediately ſpread over fields and meadows. The trees haſten to bloſſom: the feathered kind return from the ſea-ſides; and a new ſort of delight is infuſed into every heart. By degrees the air grows hot. About the end of May it is intenſe. The corn is ready for the reaper in June and July; the mulberry-tree affords food to the ſilk-worm in Auguſt and September; and the grape is liberal of her juice in October and November. Such is the courſe of the ſeaſons in the northern and weſtern parts of Italy: I mean chiefly the inland parts in theſe quarters.

Let us now ſtep over the rocks of the Ligurian hills and the cliffs of the Apennine, and let us ſee what is the condition of the inhabitants of the maritime ſhores. With them the winter is, in general, ſo mild, that they never loſe the idea of verdure. The ſnow ſcarcely ever reſts an hour on their ground. Their vines put on a new dreſs almoſt as ſoon as they have caſt

caſt off the old: all ſort of fruit ſucceed each other with rapidity; and their orange and lemon-trees never ceaſe their alteration of leaves, flowers, and fruit.

The vaſt range of mountains which divides theſe countries, feels a winter of the moſt exquiſite ſeverity, and of a very long continuance. During many a winter the people are wholly confined to their huts and cottages, where they have plenty of nothing but of firing; where they make hats of chips; eat quantities of cheſnuts, apples, dry peaches, cheeſe and polenta; but ſeldom taſte wheat-bread, meat, or fiſh; and where they divert themſelves as well as they can. In ſummer, to be ſure, they are better off; for then, with the aſſiſtance of vegetables and the birds they catch, they have a tolerable variety of food. Their general occupation in ſummer, is the pruning of their trees, the tending of their flocks; enjoying the purer air and the moſt pictureſque land-

ſcapes that can poſſibly be imagined. I have more than once croſſed both the Alps and the Apennine, and chiefly in ſeveral of thoſe places that look ſo awful and diſmal at a diſtance; and was always delightfully ſurpriſed by ſome uncommon and diverſified ſcene that almoſt at every ſtep preſented itſelf to my eyes. Many of their higher tops are thick-ſhaded with oaks, firs, and beech-trees, beſides the numberleſs cheſnut-trees that cover their ſloping ſides; and their vallies are ſo prodigiouſly fertile, and ſo romantically beautiful, that I often wondered how the whole nation could abſtain from flocking there, at leaſt as ſoon as the ſummer grants them a free paſſage.

Italy is a country of a diverſity almoſt infinite in its climate; but, in general, (eſpecially in the ſouthern parts) the heat is beyond all compariſon predominant. There it is indeed exceſſive for many days, and generally very troubleſome to thoſe

amongſt

amongſt the natives who want the means of refreſhing themſelves at home with bathing-tubs, or other ſuch conveniencies. The rich can at will ſcreen themſelves from the greateſt heat in Italy, as they can from the greateſt cold in England: and this might have eaſily been gueſſed by Mr. Sharp, and kept him from exaggerating as he has done on this trifling ſubject. I am glad when I ſee him ſitting in his elbow chair by a good fire, his amiable family round him, eating a chearful meal, and lovingly drinking each other's health. I often gaze with rapture on ſuch delightful ſcenes in Mr. Sharp's country: but how can I forbear to pity him that never enjoyed the like in mine? and how can I be pleaſed when he has little more to ſay of me, but that I ſit panting on the ſide of a room *in a callico-gown for hours together, wholly occupied in wiping off the ſweat that runs in channels down my body?* Surely he has kept company with very fat

people in Italy, who generally hate ſummer, and has never entered the houſe of a ſlender Italian when he ſpeaks in this ſtrain, and deſcribes our ſummer as ſo very diſagreeable to us all. However I have no objection to his preferring the climate of England to that of Italy; nay, the laſt time I was on our ſide of the Alps I have oftentimes been of his opinion, eſpecially when I was on a duſty road, or in a bad inn. But it is hard to ſettle the ballance of good and bad in climates. When I reflect that thoſe who can have a conſtant good fire in winter are far from being the multitude in any country, and when I conſider that the poor are better off in a hot than in a cold ſeaſon all the world over; then my opinion ſtaggers, and I always end my meditations with concluding, that that climate is more deſirable where the winter is ſhort, and of courſe the ſummer long, even though it ſhould be ſomething incommodious on account

account of heat. But let us go on with our principal ſubject.

Thoſe travellers who go to Italy by the way of France, generally enter it by the way of Piedmont, where Italy properly begins.

Piedmont is a large province, almoſt quite flat; and ſo well watered by the numberleſs rivers and brooks which flow down from the Alps, that few kingdoms can boaſt of any tract of land ſo fertile, and ſo variouſly productive as this. There you ſee numerous herds of cattle in rich paſtures: vaſt fields that yield the beſt corn and the beſt hemp; and there are every where ſuch plantations of mulberries, as, upon an average, annually produce near two millions ſterling.

There is beſides in Piedmont a fine breed of horſes and of other animals; and the whole country is ſo well ſtored with trees of many kinds, as to furniſh the inhabitants with timber for all their neceſſities

ceſſities, and with all the wood they want for firing.

The only thing produced by this province which is not univerſally excellent, though it is plentiful, is the wine: but the lower ſkirts of the neighbouring Alps, and the long chains of ſmall hills, which ſurround it on many ſides, furniſh us with ſeveral kinds of the very beſt; though at firſt not much to the taſte of thoſe ſtrangers who have been long accuſtomed to drink the wines of Portugal and France. And yet ſome ſorts of wine in Piedmont have been within theſe few years brought to ſuch perfection, as to be nearly miſtaken, both by natives and ſtrangers, ſome for Burgundy, ſome for Hermitage, and even ſome for Champaign. Nothing is more improved of late years than the management of vines in this province; and all ſorts of fruit are alſo cultivated there with the greateſt ſucceſs; ſo that it is an obſervation I have heard made by ſtrangers, that

the

the king of Sardinia may have, if he pleaſes, a better deſert of fruit than any ſovereign in Europe.

From Piedmont, without ſtopping in the province of Montferrat and ſome others, chiefly abounding in good wine and fine ſilks, we enter the Milaneſe: and of this tract of Italy I have little to ſay, but that it is full as fertile as Piedmont, and even exceeds it in ſome reſpects. And it is a pretty ſtriking proof of its fertility, that, though it is but as large as Devonſhire, or as Yorkſhire at moſt, yet in the ſpace of ſix years during the laſt war, the empreſs-queen drew from it forty-two millions of Milaneſe livres, (near a million and a half ſterling) the whole fairly exported in ſpecie into Germany; and yet the Milaneſe have ſtill lived on at the uſual rate; that is, very ſplendidly and profuſely.

The ſtates of Parma, Modena, and Mantua, and the territories of Bologna

and

and Ferrara, are little inferiour in point of fertility to the Milaneſe, and produce great quantities of corn, wine, ſilk, hemp, and cattle. The ſame is to be ſaid of the provinces which the Venetians poſſeſs in Italy; ſo that from the Alps of Piedmont down to the Venetian Lagunes, an acre of land not cultivated is ſcarcely to be ſeen: and this fertility, as I ſaid, is owing to the water flowing down from the Alps on one ſide, and from the Apennine, on the other; which waters are conducted wherever the inhabitants chuſe, at no very great expence, and by means of many canals, ſome of which have been made large enough to anſwer the purpoſes of inland navigation as well as thoſe of agriculture. Almoſt all the waters on the weſt and north of Italy, fall ultimately into the Po, and render it one of the moſt conſiderable rivers in Europe, extending itſelf more than three hundred and fifty miles from its ſource above Raconigi in Piedmont to the Adriatic.

But

But beſides the great mountains which encompaſs theſe provinces almoſt on every ſide, and give them the appearance of an immenſe amphitheatre, there are hills of a moderate height which border each province. Theſe hills are all ſo fruitful and pleaſant, that our nobility have filled them with their villa's. The Piedmonteſe have what is called *La Collina*; that is, a ridge of low hills, which begins not far from Turin, and continues along the banks of the Po for about forty or fifty miles, all covered with houſes and vineyards, except a few of the higheſt tops; and from all parts of this ridge you have extenſive proſpects, which are ſeldom or never enjoyed by ſtrangers, becauſe the towns and villages thick-ſcattered all over them, are not famed for pictures, ſtatues, and carnival-diverſions. The ſame may be ſaid, as I have already hinted, of the *Mount-Brianza*, which terminates the Milaneſe on the ſide of Switzerland, and of the hills

in the neighbourhood of Bergamo, Breſcia, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua, where you ſee on all parts, as on the *Mount-Brianza*, innumerable mills, turned by artificial ſtreams, ſome for reeling ſilk, (like that which I have ſeen at Derby) ſome for grinding corn; ſome for ſawing planks; ſome for manufacturing iron, cloth, paper, and other things. There it is, that foreigners, if they would take the trouble, might ſee what the Italians are; what their ſkill and ingenuity in arts and manufactures; and what their riches.

I have the more willingly mentioned theſe ſeveral ridges of hills, as I have but ſeldom or never met in the books of Engliſh travellers with any account, even ſhort and imperfect, of thoſe parts of northern and weſtern Italy, which are, one may ſay, but a ſtone's throw from the great road of Rome. Theſe gentlemen tell you of Turin, Milan, Breſcia, Venice, and ſome other towns on that ſide, that they

they are very well built towns, very populous, and very rich; but they never tell by what means they are, and have been, maintained for ſo long a ſpace of time in the ſtate they deſcribe them.

With regard to Tuſcany, the Papal ſtate beyond Bologna, and the kingdom of Naples, I have not ſo much to ſay, as of the Ciſalpine ſide of Italy; becauſe, excepting a few parts of the Romagna and the Marca, it never was in my power to examine them ſo attentively, as to make me venture upon a deſcription. However, one may collect from the ſeveral accounts of itinerary writers, that Tuſcany is one of the moſt fruitful and beſt cultivated countries in Europe, and that it abounds with arts and manufactures as much as any province that can be named. That it is as moſt travellers have deſcribed it, the beauty of Florence, Piſa, Leghorn, Lucca, and ſeveral other towns of the Tuſcans, is an undeniable proof; for certainly they could

could never be ſo beautiful as they are, if their territories were not fruitful, and their inhabitants induſtrious. The Papal ſtate, beſides the territories of Bologna and Ferrara, has many tracts very well cultivated and peopled, though it has many that are little leſs than deſart: and as to the kingdom of Naples, ſome of its provinces have the reputation in Italy of being upon the whole ſtill more fertile and more various in their productions than even Lombardy and Piedmont; and they muſt certainly be ſo; otherwiſe their capital town, which contains at leaſt half the number of people in London, could certainly not ſubſiſt.

But let me not omit that narrow ſtreak of land, which lies on the Tyrrhene ſea. I mean only that tract which is partly poſſeſſed by the king of Sardinia, and partly by the Genoeſe. The land there can neither boaſt of paſtures covered with fat oxen, nor of fields rich in corn and hemp,

hemp, as Piedmont, and Lombardy. It is a rocky country, almoſt without timber, and not much abounding in wine: and yet the inhabitants have no reaſon to envy their neighbours: for, beſides their lemons and oranges, which yield a pretty income, they have a tree that makes them ample amends for whatever they may want. The tree I mean, is the olive, which thrives there better perhaps than in any other part of the known world.

To give ſome idea of the advantage the Genoeſe reap by the olive-tree, I muſt tell my reader, that on the weſtern extremity of their country, there is an independent principality ſo very ſmall, that I have leiſurely walked it backwards and forwards in a day, holding an umbrella in my hand becauſe it was a rainy day.

This empire in miniature is little more than ſix miles long, and little more than half a mile broad where it is broadeſt. And yet there are upon it two towns

(Monaco and Mentone) which contain about five thouſand inhabitants between both: a village (Roccabruna) with about four hundred ſouls in it; and about ſix hundred inhabitants more, who live in ſingle houſes and in cottages ſcattered up and down the mountain that limits it on the north, as the ſea does on the ſouth. Is it not a little ſurpriſing that about ſix thouſand people can find their ſuſtenance in a tract of land ſcarcely four miles ſquare, and at a conſiderable diſtance from all populous towns? yet it is ſtill more ſurpriſing, that almoſt the whole of their ſuſtenance ariſes from their oil, which they have there in ſuch quantity, that the thirteenth part of it, which they give in kind, and as ſubjects, to their ſovereign, forms an income to him of about four thouſand pounds ſterling: ſo that, ſuppoſing all the owners of olive-trees there very faithful in giving the full thirteenth part of their oil to their ſovereign, the oil produced by ſo

ſmall

ſmall a tract of land muſt be worth thirteen times four thouſand pound; that is, above fifty thouſand pounds ſterling. Had any man ſo many acres of land along that coaſt as ſome dukes have in England, how much do you think he would be worth? We are therefore not to wonder, if the Genoeſe, many parts of whoſe territory along that coaſt are ſtill better than the principality of Monaco, have many rich ſubjects: we are not to wonder when we read in Addiſon, and in other travel-writers, that there are in Genoa ſeveral palaces ſo large and ſo magnificent, as to be fit for kings and emperors; and we are not to wonder if ſo ſmall a ſtate can boaſt of ſeveral families, ſuch as the Doria, Spinola, Grimaldi, and others, whoſe names are as well known as thoſe of the moſt illuſtrious perſons in the weſtern world. Wherever intrinſic and real riches abound, great buildings

will be raiſed, and great families will be formed upon the leaſt concurrence of induſtry with a favourable turn of fortune.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

I HAVE juſt ſaid a word *en paſſant* in the preceding chapter, of the breeds of horſes that are in Piedmont; and every body that has ſeen Turin, and the king of Sardinia's ſtables and ſtuds in ſeveral parts of that province, will eaſily allow, that there are a good many fine horſes both for the coach and ſaddle. The ſame may be ſaid with regard to ſeveral provinces that lye along the Po, and eſpecially that called the *Polèſine* beyond Ferrara, where they have ſeveral breeds much eſteemed all over Italy.

But the kingdom of Naples is the country, which in this particular ſurpaſſes all other parts of Italy. This kingdom abounds in horſes that are ſtrong, well made, mettleſome, and withal of a high

ſtature and impoſing air. I do not pretend to any ſkill on this head, and can only judge of them, either at ſecond hand, or by the ſimple effect which the ſight of a horſe produces on a ſlight inſpection. Judging in this manner, I ſay that the ſeveral ſets of Neapolitan horſes which I have ſeen in the king's ſtables at Verſailles, are certainly not inferiour to the very fineſt that are purchaſed for that monarch in the Holſtein, in Denmark, and in Spain itſelf. I have beſides ſeen another ſet at Madrid, and ordered by that king from the country where he had long reigned; and that ſet, when led in the ſun, appeared as if they had been gilded with gold. That indeed was the very fineſt ſet of horſes that I ever ſaw any where. I have likewiſe heard many travellers ſpeak in very emphatic terms of the great numbers, as well as of the great beauty of the horſes which are to be ſeen in Naples, and all accounts ſeem to agree, that that

kingdom

kingdom is one of the countries in Europe most remarkable in this particular.

And yet Mr. Sharp, who is very diffuse on the riches and conveniences of life to be remarked in that city, (which yet he has the art of metamorphosing into poverty and inconveniencies) scarcely mentions its horses; as if horses, instead of being real riches, and real conveniencies, were so very miserable an object, as not to deserve the least attention from a travel-writer. He passes over this article with only informing his correspondent, that *all job-horses you hire at Naples, are poor and starved things, of which it is even difficult to procure a pair*; and this may be very true for aught I know; though it is still credible, that with money many a pair may very well be procured.

He cannot have acted quite fairly neither, when he assures us, that the Italian horses and the Italian postillions are so very bad, that *one may give what scope he*

pleaſes to his fancy, and yet will never imagine half their diſagreeableneſs. I do not know in what the agreeableneſs of poſt-horſes and poſtillions conſiſts, according to Mr. Sharp's notions; but I know, that this way of telling things, as I have already obſerved, betrays more moroſeneſs and ill-will, than judgment and love of truth; and is indeed perfectly ridiculous, if it be true that the *outré* is always ridiculous. The fact is, that the poſt-horſes are in general very good all over Italy, and that our poſtillions generally drive at a great rate, trotting their horſes on any aſcent and deſcent that will poſſibly permit it, and galloping on flat ground rather in a deſperado-way than otherwiſe: and that this is a fact, I appeal to any Engliſh gentleman who has rid poſt through Italy, and not gone hundreds and hundreds of miles with the ſame cattle, as Mr. Sharp has done to my certain knowledge.

However

However the number of horſes is not proportionably ſo large in Italy as in England, eſpecially that of ſaddle-horſes; and this becauſe the Italians travel little through their country, as I ſaid, eſpecially on horſeback; becauſe they have no horſe-races (except thoſe inconſiderable ones that I have mentioned); becauſe they have no ſtage-coaches nor waggons croſſing the country on all parts; and becauſe they do not make ſo general a uſe of horſes in the buſineſs of agriculture; but plough their lands with oxen, at leaſt in all the parts of Italy that I have ſeen.

As for the carrying of burthens, we make uſe of mules, and of another animal called *Gimerro* *, eſpecially throughout the mountains, where horſes would ſoon periſh.

* *Gimerro* in Engliſh is *Jumart*, from the French. See Johnſon's dictionary.

Of mules we have great droves continually carrying merchandiſes, particularly over thoſe parts of the Apennine that anſwer to the port of Leghorn; thoſe of the Alps that lye between Italy and Savoy, Switzerland, and Tirol; and thoſe which geographers call the Ligurian Alps. Some of the muletteers of the Apennine draw even carts with mules; but thoſe of the Alps never do, or at leaſt I never ſaw any that did. Perhaps the greater hight of the Alps and their unconquerable ruggedneſs cauſes the want of this convenience.

It will not be improper to ſay ſomething of the gimerro's, as I find that no travel-writer, of the many I have read, has ever mentioned them, and that they are but little known even to thoſe of my Engliſh friends who delight in various and extenſive reading. A gimerro is an animal born of a horſe and a cow; or of a bull and a mare; or of an aſs and a cow.

cow. The two firſt ſorts are generally as large as the largeſt mules, and the third ſomewhat ſmaller. I have been told by ſome muletteers in ſeveral parts, that the ſires of theſe animals are firſt ſhown a female of their ſpecies juſt before the leap; then led forcibly to one of the ſpecies intended, which is kept at hand. The alpine peaſants aſſure us, that they might get a fourth kind between a bull and a female aſs, but that they ordinarily prove ſorry things. Of the two firſt ſorts I have ſeen hundreds, eſpecially at Demont, a fortreſs in the Alps (about ten miles above the town of Cuneo) that was much talked of during the laſt war between the French and the Piedmonteſe. There many of theſe gimerro's were uſed, chiefly in carrying ſtones and ſand up to the fortreſs that was then a building on a high rocky hill. Of the third ſpecies I rode upon one from Savona * to Acqui, ſo late as the year

* Savona is a town on the Ligurian coaſt, belonging to the Genoeſe, and Acqui is the capital of Upper

1765. It was a ſluggiſh beaſt, ſcarcely ſenſible of the bit and whip; but wonderfully ſure-footed: and riding that way in January, as I did, in a moſt rugged by-road; the whole country round covered with a deep ſnow; many a mile in a narrow path, often on the brink of a precipice, and all the north ſides of the frequent cliffs, (over which I was to go) perfectly hidden under the hardeſt ice; going ſuch a way, I ſay, I had really need of ſuch a beaſt, that was very careful not to fall.

The gimerro's reſemble the mules ſo much, that, if you are not told, you will ſcarcely ever think of the difference, which chiefly conſiſts in the ears, not ſo long as thoſe of the mules; in the parts of the head about the noſtrils and mouth, which in the gimerro's are generally rounder

Upper Monferrat, belonging to the king of Sardinia.

than

than in the mules; and in the middle of the back which is ſharper in the mules than in the gimerro's. Thoſe between a bull and a mare have likewiſe a fiercer aſpect than the other two ſpecies's; and the ſpecies of that on which I went that journey, have their upper fore-teeth remarkably more forward than their under; and yet they feed very well. A careful examiner, I believe, would diſcover more diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of the gimerro's than I did. My eyes, which are none of the beſt, and conſequently not much uſed to ſurvey objects with great exactneſs, did not help me to more. The mules are rather perverſe in their nature than otherwiſe; and the gimerro's of the largeſt ſizes are ſtill worſe. But ſince it comes in my way, I will ſay that the perverſity of the mules has been exaggerated beyond meaſure by Dr. Smollet in his account of Italy; and it is not true, that they will bite and kick the horſes they meet on the

road. I never perceived any particular antipathy of this kind in thefe uſeful beaſts. It is indeed not ſafe to ſtand behind a mule when unloaded; but as to biting on the road or out of the road, horſes or any other creatures, I will ſay it to their honour, is not a part of their nature. The doctor has taken this fact upon truſt, or has dreamed it, as he has done ſeveral other throughout his book, of which I have not taken notice in any of the foregoing chapters, not only becauſe it would have led me too far to confute them all, but alſo becauſe there is a certain livelineſs and aſſurance in his ſtyle and manner, that diverted me even when he was wrong.

But ſince I have happened to mention the quadrupeds of Italy, and offered even an apology for our mules, I may as well give a good word to our aſſes.

The nature of our country requires many mules, which cannot prove good, except

except their ſires are alſo good. We therefore take great care to have good aſſes. The very beſt in Italy; that is, the talleſt and ſtrongeſt, are thoſe of the Marca: and this province by the bye, is ſo famous for the number and goodneſs of its aſſes, that in our language the word *marchigiano* (inhabitant or native of the Marca) is no very honourable appellation, and too much in the Billingſgate-ſtyle. One of the beſt aſſes and fit for breeding, is ſometimes purchaſed in the Marca at a very high price; and I have heard of ſome which have been ſold for fifty pounds ſterling, and even more.

Of the minor domeſtic quadrupeds of Italy, there is no need of ſpeaking, as I know of none there, but what are common in England, except I was to ſay, that we are far from having ſo many ſheep and rabbits as the Engliſh, though we have a good many. We have alſo comparatively very few deer; but there are

many ſtags that run wild, beſides a few that are kept in encloſures. We have a number of wild-boars, ſome bears, and ſome *camozzi* and *caprioli*, which are two ſpecies of wild goats; and a great many wolves in our mountains and woods. So that, conſidering the great plenty and variety of fruit and grain, as well as the variety and numbers of quadrupeds there, Petrarch was in the right when he called Italy

Terra di biade e d' animai ferace.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIX.

WHAT I have here ſaid concerning the public and domeſtic exerciſes practiſed in different parts of Italy, will, I believe be thought ſufficient to ſhow, that if the Italians do not make it a point of public policy (as the ancient Romans did) to be nationally vigorous, yet they are not ſuch puny mortals as foreign travellers and poets uſually paint them, and that indolence and effeminacy are not more diffuſed amongſt them than amongſt any other of the European nation.

Let me now be indulged in a few more curſory obſervations on other ſuch parts of their peculiar characteriſtics as will come in my way without any great effort in ſearching for them; as alſo, on ſome additional ſtrictures on a few more paſſages in Mr. Sharp's Letters.

The politeneſs of the Italians to ſtrangers has been allowed by almoſt all travel-writers of all nations: and Mr. Sharp himſelf, though always unwilling to grant them any good quality, has been candid enough in this particular when he conſidered their politeneſs as exerted in favour of his countrymen.

But Mr. Sharp is undoubtedly miſtaken when he intimates that the Italians have an antipathy to the French, and when he adds that this antipathy has its ſource in their *frequent and wanton invaſions of Italy.*

Beſides that the word *wanton* is ridiculouſly employed in his remark, as no nation is invaded merely through wantonneſs by another, there are few ſtates in Italy that have ſuffered much by what Mr. Sharp terms *invaſions*: nay ſome of thoſe very ſtates, where French armies have appeared in the two laſt wars, were in my opinion rather benefited than hurt by their appearance.

However,

However, be this as it will the Italians have had no great cauſe to complain of the French for ſeveral years; and as none of our governments ſuffer virulent ſcribblers to inflame us with a hateful averſion to this or that race of outlandiſh mortals, our general ſentiments with regard to the French, are juſt ſuch as thoſe we entertain with regard to all other nations upon earth; ſo that a Frenchman travelling through Italy is full as much careſſed and reſpected as an Engliſhman or any other European.

Nor is the politeneſs we practiſe towards ſtrangers ever allayed by the groſs pride, ſo common in ſome countries, where if a foreigner meets with ſome civility from the natives, he is ſure likewiſe of being inſulted with ill-timed and partial boaſts of ſuperiority. I think I have obſerved too much of this in Spain, and ſtill more in France. But our delicacy on this head is ſo great, that we conſider it as a breach

of good manners to ſpeak with any warmth in praiſe of our country in the preſence of a ſtranger. An Italian will ſhew him his houſe, his pictures, his villa, or any thing he poſſeſſes, without ever putting to him the coarſe queſtion, whether he has ever ſeen any thing finer. He will make *him* take notice of a beauty of art or nature, becauſe he thinks it worth notice; but he never forgets that compariſons are odious: and I remember a lady of Venice, who ſeverely rebuked her froward ſon for having aſked me whether in my country there was any ſquare ſo fine as that of St. Mark, and obliged him to aſk my pardon for his incivility. And yet moſt Italians are ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed in favour of their country; which prepoſſeſſion they muſt naturally retain as long as they ſee a number of ſtrangers ſucceſſively viſiting their provinces.

I have already obſerved that the Italians are much attached to their native places.

A ſingular

A ſingular proof of this attachment is obſervable in almoſt all Italian books; as our authors ſeldom forget to ſpecify in the title-page the particular ſpot where they are born, be it ever ſo inglorious a town or obſcure a village.

Mr. Sharp, humbly mimicking Mr. Addiſon, has been ſo ſagacious as to diſcover, that the Neapolitans are much addicted to litigiouſneſs. He ſpeaks with great emphaſis of the ſtreets of Naples ſo crouded with advocates, as to obſtruct his paſſage to their chief court of judicature. *What a bleſſed country,* he exclaims after his exaggerated account, *where all who are not princes or beggars, are lawyers or prieſts!*

But all remarks of this nature, begging Mr. Sharp's pardon, betray more levity and malice than their authors are aware of. The Italians in general are not better pleaſed with a tedious attendance in a court of judicature, or in the outer room of a

lawyer, than the Engliſh or any other people. Yet in large cities, where both the power and the commerce of a kingdom are centered; where the moſt important affairs of a nation muſt finally be determined; and where different intereſts are variouſly interwoven, how is it poſſible to avoid a great deal of litigation? Monſieur Voltaire, or Monſieur L'Abbé Le Blanc (I do not remember which) has, very ridiculouſly in my opinion, made a criticiſm of this nature upon the *Engliſh*; and I remember to have read ſomewhere in an Engliſh book or news-paper ſome panegyrical pages on the king of Pruſſia for having iſſued a code, in which among other regulations concerning the diſpatch of juſtice, there is one by which the Pruſſian judges are enjoined to terminate any cauſe whatſoever within the ſpace of a twelvemonth. But what may poſſibly be done in ſuch a military and uncommercial ſtate as that of Pruſſia, begging again Mr.

Sharp's

Sharp's pardon, cannot be done either in London or in Naples, for reaſons that would be very obvious to him, if he had ever given much attention to the affairs of men, and examined with a ſagacious eye the multifarious tranſactions of the ſeveral courts at Weſtminſter, as well as in the inferiour tribunals of this great metropolis. And his ill-natured exclamation in deriſion of the Neapolitans would certainly have been ſpared, if he had been able to comprehend, that a metropolis merely inhabited by princes, beggars, lawyers, and prieſts, cannot poſſibly exiſt but in a diſordered imagination.

I have no where in the preceding chapter taken any notice of our cuſtoms with regard to marriages and funerals, becauſe on theſe two particulars I never remarked any very material difference between our cuſtoms and thoſe of the Engliſh. People marry in Italy after the publication of three bans as they do in England; and

a diſpenſation of bans is eaſily procured there as well as here by thoſe who do not chuſe to marry in a church. Great dinners and great ſuppers are cuſtomary in both countries upon ſuch occaſions: I mean amongſt the midling and lower ſort of people, who adhere longeſt to old cuſtoms, and whoſe uſages form the principal part of the national manners. Congratulations of the ſame kind are uſual on the ſame occaſions: and with reſpect to funerals, little more is to be ſaid, but that the people in Italy are commonly buried in their pariſh-church or church-yard, as has been ſaid over and over by travel-writers; and few corpſes are ſent to diſtant places to be buried in family-vaults, as the cuſtom is in England, becauſe the Italians live in towns and not in country-ſeats, as many of the Engliſh nobility and gentry do, or are reputed to do.

The only remarkable difference between the two nations with reſpect to funerals is, that a corpſe in Italy is commonly eſcorted

to the burial-place by a large proceſſion of prieſts, friars, and orphans of both ſexes maintained in hoſpitals, all with lighted tapers in their hands, and all ſinging penitential pſalms, litanies, and other compoſitions, which we think well adapted to the occaſion. And ſuch proceſſions are longer or ſhorter; that is, more or leſs expenſive, as has been ordered either by the teſtator, or by thoſe, whoſe duty or buſineſs is to take care of the funeral.

But a corpſe in all parts of Italy is always carried to the burial-place uncovered; and *this faſhion* (ſays Mr. Sharp with his uſual peremptorineſs) *this faſhion I muſt condemn; for the aſpect of death* (does he add with his uſual wiſdom) *ſhould never be ſuffered to become too familiar to the common people with ſo much brimſtone in their veins, as the Neapolitan mob have.*

I do not know by what ſort of anatomical experiment Mr. Sharp has been able to diſcover, that the Neapolitan mob have brimſtone

brimſtone in their veins. But as to his peremptorineſs and wiſdom, I fear they are quite as improper in this place, as what he immediately ſubjoins, that *if a dead or a dying man was a frightful object, a murderer would feel remorſe in the very act of homicide, or the moment after; but there are ways to render men capable of butchering a man and a hog with the ſame ſang froid.*

If I do not miſunderſtand this obſcure paſſage, Mr. Sharp means, that the faſhion of carrying the dead uncovered to the burial-place, contributes to render men murderers, becauſe it hardens their hearts to ſuch a degree, as to bring them to kill a man and a hog with equal indifference. But if this is Mr. Sharp's meaning, (and I do not know what other conſtruction can be put upon his words) I muſt take the liberty to tell him, that he knows but little of the general effect that the ſight of a dead perſon muſt produce in

in the heart of a beholder, eſpecially when that dead perſon is carried to the burial-place with the ſolemnity of a ſad apparatus, and mournful praying and ſinging, as the Italians uſe to do. Far from having any immoral tendency, it will eaſily be conceived by my reader, that ſuch a ſight muſt rather ſerve to awaken in every mind a train of reflections, no leſs melancholly than uſeful, on the vanity of life and its moſt courted felicities. I can very well conceive, that there are means of bringing a beginner in anatomy to familiariſe himſelf ſo much with dead bodies, as to cut up the corpſe of a man with as much ſang froid as the carcaſe of any animal; and yet I do not neceſſarily ſuppoſe a ſurgeon to be of courſe deſtitute of humanity: but I cannot poſſibly comprehend how the mournful ſight of a man, woman, or child, decently laid down on a bier, and ſeen for a ſhort ſpace at the end of a funeral prooceſſion, can give ſuch a cruel diſpoſition to any mind, as to ren-

der, or contribute to render, any man a murderer. But Mr. Sharp had aſſerted that the Italians have a natural propenſity to murder and aſſaſſination, and did not care what arguments he uſed and what evidence he produced to prove that aſſertion.

Whenever any ſingular piece of antiquity is diſcovered in thoſe parts of Italy where ſuch ſort of things are more frequently found than in other places, all kinds of people eagerly run to look at it: and thoſe amongſt the learned of England who delight in the ſtudy of ancient monuments, are very well appriſed, that no learned men of any nation have given ſo many accounts of ſuch remains as the Italians. The apartments and gardens of perſons of rank at Rome, Naples, and other places, abound with ſuch remains; nay, the very walls of many of their houſes are artfully incruſtated with them; and rather too many of our learned turn

their

their minds to the explanation of theſe monuments.

Yet Mr. Sharp overlooks all this moſt cavalierly, and rallies and ridicules the Italians for the *little veneration they ſhew to ſuch curioſities*; and is of opinion, that any Engliſh gentleman *with five thouſand a year, would mortgage a part of it to preſerve a temple of Serapis in its exact form, with all the ornaments, paintings, &c.*

But does Mr. Sharp give here a juſt idea of the Italians, or does he pay a compliment, at their expence, to his own countrymen? *The king*, he adds, *or rather the regency of Naples, lay violent hands*, as he wittily phraſes it, *on the ſtatues and pictures as they occur in digging, and tranſport them to ſome of the royal palaces where they loſe half their merit.* But how can it be made out, that they loſe half their merit by being collected and arranged in large rooms and galleries deſtined to this purpoſe? Would it not rather be moſt

abſurd to let them continue in damps and dirty ſubterraneous places, where the greateſt part of them could not be inſpected but with infinite inconvenience, and by the light of candles and torches? I have no objection to Mr. Sharp for his having a very good opinion of thoſe among his countrymen who are poſſeſſed of five thouſand a year: but a man muſt be ſtrangely inclined to chicanery, who can ridicule the Italians, when he ſees them aſſiduouſly employed in preſerving all monuments that can poſſibly be preſerved. If all the attention, which the ideas of ſpeculatiſts on ſuch ſubjects might require, be not paid to every monument of antiquity, neither is it of mighty conſequence. Theſe things depend on the taſte and diſpoſition of princes and rich noblemen, who are capricious, ſometimes undervaluing, ſometimes overvaluing ſuch curioſities.

Moſt travellers, as they arrive at Rome or Naples, can ſcarcely abſtain from reflecting

flecting upon their inhabitants, becauſe, inſtead of poſſeſſing the identical buildings of the ancient emperors and conſuls, they ſcarcely own a few of their ruins. One ridicules them for having nothing but poor villas or cots on thoſe very ſpots, that were formerly dignified by temples dedicated to Jupiter and Mercury; the other is angry, becauſe the Italians croſs now on a vile ferry thoſe rivers, that were formerly half hidden under magnificent bridges: and after many erudite and doleful commemorations of this kind, they join in chorus to abuſe the governments of both ſtates, which diſcourage population by letting monks and nuns tread the ground that was once trod by Ceſars; the glorious ground on which the Romans uſed to ſwarm like bees in a hive, and where ſome of them had habitations large enough to receive hundreds of gueſts upon occaſion.

But do theſe wiſe travellers expect that Italy, confined to its own products and its

own

own induſtry, ſhould vie with that magnificence which it received from the ſpoils of a conquered world? Perhaps Italy, on the whole, may not fall very ſhort of *its* ancient population. This is not a place for ſuch diſcuſſions: but if Italy does not now make other nations ſo miſerable, as formerly, by the effects of a ſucceſsful ambition, its inhabitants are not in themſelves the leſs happy, or a leſs valuable part of the ſociety of mankind.

Mr. Sharp indeed has not often copied the learned tone of lamentation uſed by many other travellers with regard to the ancient ſtate of Rome and Naples: but with regard to their preſent condition and government, he has really ſurpaſſed by much all his rambling predeceſſors in point of vilifying remarks. I give him due praiſe upon the firſt account; becauſe really the ravages of time can no more be helped by the modern Romans or Neapolitans, than the revolutions of the moon.

But

But as to the ſecond part of the ſtory, without entering into a diſcuſſion that would require a large volume, I may ſeriouſly aſſure him, that I know ſtill ſhallower ſtateſmen than he is, who not only can find fault with any government in the world, but even form with the greateſt eaſineſs ſuch plans of reformation for any country, as would, (if well attended to) beſtow upon any nation every ſpecies of bleſſing that can poſſibly be fancied by the moſt brilliant imagination.

Mr. Sharp has ſeen in Venice many (or, as he ſays, an *infinity of*) *ſmall lyon's heads about the Doge's palace, large enough to receive into their mouths* (from informers) *a letter or billet, with labels over, pointing out what the nature of the information ſhould be.* Hence he has directly concluded, that the Venetian government *continues to encourage private informations.*

But this is a miſrepreſentation of facts; for this method of informing is no longer

practiſed there, whatever may have been the cuſtom in former times. Thoſe heads have been long full of cobwebs and choaked with duſt, as Mr. Sharp might have ſeen if he had looked into them. It is even probable that they were originally placed there *in terrorem*, rather with a view to prevent crimes than multiply informers. A regulation perhaps not imprudent before the government was ſo ſeated and the police ſo regulated as it is at preſent, becauſe Venice is a large and open town, which cannot conveniently be guarded by ſoldiers or watchmen.

Mr. Sharp ſpeaks likewiſe at random when he ſays, that the Doge of Venice, *as ſoon as elected, is to avoid all ſhow of equality and familiarity, and to ſeclude himſelf in a manner from the ſweets of ſociety.* How came Mr. Sharp to know ſo much about the Pope at Rome, and the Doge at Venice? If you will take his word, he is as much appriſed of the thoughts of one, and the domeſtic

life

life of the other as of his own: Yet the fact is, that a Doge muſt certainly pay great reſpect to his new dignity, and not proſtitute it to an affectation of equality and familiarity: but, if he is of a ſociable good-natured temper, he may freely continue to live in his private capacity as he did before; go about maſked in carnival or aſcenſion-time, either alone or in company as he pleaſes, and paſs the evening at his caſine with his friends. He will be better liked for ſuch a conduct, and avoid the blame of pride, as was the caſe with Doge Foſcarini, who died when I was laſt at Venice. When in the exerciſe of his office, you had taken him for a very haughty man: but out of it, he was even a more chearful and pleaſing companion than before his being Doge.

Mr. Sharp ſays, that it *is not only Padua, but every other town in the territory of the republic, that appears poor in compariſon of the mother city.* An acute remark indeed!

But is this not the caſe in England, France, Turkey and every where? However, I ſuppoſe, Mr. Sharp cannot have any great difficuly to grant, that amongſt the daughter-towns in his own country, there are not eaſily to be found four ſo full of fine buildings and ſo populous, as Vicenza, Verona, Breſcia, and Bergamo.

Mr. Sharp is not pleaſed with the Farneſian Hercules, *becauſe*, ſays he, *there is no ſuch original in nature, as he happens to know from his particular ſtudies, that the muſcles of a man's body, however much inflated, would never aſſume the ſhape they do in that ſtatue.* I know indeed but little of Anatomy, and am really a very indifferent connoiſſeur: yet, as I have always heard people reckon the Farneſian Hercules a moſt admirable model of a man when ſuppoſed to partake of ſomething divine, as was the caſe with that demigod; and as the Venus de Medici's has been for a good number of centuries looked upon as one

of

of the moſt aſtoniſhing models of female beauty that was ever formed by a chiſſel, I muſt continue to think that Glycon and Cleomenes were good ſtatuaries, and that Mr. Sharp and Dr. Smollet* are no competent judges of human form, be their ſkill in anatomy ever ſo wonderful, and their compaſs of connoiſſeurſhip ever ſo extenſive.

Mr. Sharp ſays, that the monks at Naples exhibit plays in their convents during the carnival; and this I know to be cuſtomary. But I know that it is not cuſtomary for them, as he ſays, *to appear in very laſcivious characters.* The aſſertion ſavours much of malignity and calumny; and I wiſh he had forborn it, or given ſuch proofs of it as to render it unqueſtionable. Our monks are not yet gone ſo far in imprudence, as to be indecent in the eyes of the public: and ſhould they ever for-

* Dr. Smollet has found fault with the Venus de Medici.

get themſelves ſo far as to repreſent any thing laſcivious, both the eccleſiaſtical and civil government would certainly not fail to make them immediately ſenſible of ſo groſs an error.

But I am tired of running over the blunders, the caricatures, and, above all, the gigantic exaggerations of this gentleman, who could find an Engliſh gardener in Italy *under a ſtate of deſpair becauſe there he could not taſte a peach of a true flavour.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XL. AND LAST.

ITALY affords ſo many objects worth obſervation and deſcription, that a work of the nature of mine might eaſily be made very voluminous. Yet to write in a foreign language, to which during theſe laſt ſix years I have been but little accuſtomed, has proved ſo difficult, that I think it is time to take leave of my readers, after offering a few hints to thoſe who intend to travel through Italy, which probably may not be unuſeful.

I believe it is not neceſſary to ſay, that a diſpoſition to ſpend money freely, is one of the chief requiſites towards the pleaſure of ſuch an undertaking. However there are few Engliſh travellers who need this advice; and perhaps it would not be improper to warn ſome of the moſt profuſe, of the general character this quality has ac-

quired them in Italy, where they are often called dupes and fools; and many of my countrymen have wiſhed for a law to prevent their coming into Italy, unleſs they come with a certificate, importing that they know the true uſe of money: for it is certain that their prodigality has a very bad effect; rendering our inn-keepers, poſtillions, and other perſons of that ſort, ſo greedy after money, that they are continually riſing in their demands; and thoſe who ſucceſſively make the ſame tour, find the expences of travelling always encreaſing. I think it was acutely imagined by Mr. Sharp, that *the Pope is ſometimes pleaſed to ſpeak of the Engliſh with a kind of gratitude for the ſums of money they ſpend among ſt his ſubjects.* Whoever knows what a pitiful gentleman the Pope is, and what need he has of a few Engliſh guineas to keep his poor family from ſtarving, will readily miſtake for realities the ſtrange dreams of Mr. Sharp. However I will aſſure him, when

when he is awake, that no ſenſible perſon in Rome or out of Rome, is of his Holineſs's mind in this particular, if his Holineſs is of this mind: that no Italian gentleman, one ſmall degree above our friend Antonio, never troubles his head about the coming or not coming of Engliſh gentlemen in the country; and that we all deſpiſe foreigners, when we ſee them ſquandering their money in an improper manner.

A traveller ought to have his poſt-chaiſe not only ſtrongly built to reſiſt the many ſtony roads in Italy, but likewiſe have it ſo contrived, as to be eaſily taken to pieces where it muſt inevitably be diſjoined in order to paſs a mountain or to be put into a * felucca; that is, in going over mount Cenis, or from ſome port of ſouthern France to Genoa.

* A felucca is a ſmall bark about the ſize of a common barge, much uſed along the Ligurian coaſt.

And *a propos* of mount Cenis, let no one be frightened by the diſmal accounts, ſo frequent in the books of travel-writers, of the bad road over dangerous precipices through Savoy or the Apennines. Thoſe dangerous precipices exiſt no where, but in the imagination of the timorous; for wherever there is any dubious paſs, the Italian poſtilions have commmon ſenſe enough not to venture their necks along with thoſe of their paſſengers, but they deſire them to alight and aſſiſt in conquering the difficulty, if there are no people of the country at hand: and even this happens but very ſeldom, becauſe the podeſta's and head-men of towns and villages take ſufficient care of the roads every where, or at leaſt have any dangerous paſs mended as ſoon as they are appriſed of it by the poſt-maſters, who would loudly complain to their common ſuperiors, if their informations of this nature were overlooked.

Nor would I have Mr. Sharpe's advice followed; that of hiring voiturins through Savoy, on pretence that whether you ride poſt or not, you ſtill advance at the ſame ſlow rate. You may ride poſt through the greateſt part of Savoy with the ſame expedition as any where elſe; and the only advantage to be had by croſſing it with a voiturin (that is, with the ſame ſet of horſes) is, that of paſſing two or three nights more than you would otherwiſe in poor inns, as you cannot reach diſtant towns every night.

But I had almoſt forgot to ſay, that along with money and ſome knowledge of its uſe, you muſt indiſpenſably carry along with you a chearful and friendly diſpoſition of mind.

It is not eaſy to conceive why travellers are ſo ready to entertain diguſts againſt the inhabitants of the countries they viſit. They ſeem to have no other purpoſe by taking long journeys but to procure themſelves,

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the baſe pleaſure of railing at every thing they have ſeen and heard. It is to this malignant diſpoſition, that we owe the many ridiculous and unjuſt accuſations, which travellers bring againſt the countries they have but curſorily viſited. Chriſtians againſt Chriſtians are particularly ſevere, and hate each other very often upon the moſt ſlender motives. I once heard a Frenchman ſwear that he hated the Engliſh, *parce qu'ils verſent du beurre fondu ſur leur veau rôti.* And yet, neither Proteſtants nor Catholics are angry with the Turks or the Eaſt-Indians for their peculiar practices; but relate them in their travels without the leaſt particle of that indignation that fires them when they ſpeak of each other. Why do they not adopt the ſame moderation when they give accounts of each other's country? Strange, that they will ſuffer themſelves to be thrown into fits of the ſpleen when they ſee a man ſtrutting along a ſtreet with his hat under

his arm, or two ſtout fellows boxing, or a proceſſion, or any other thing not cuſtomary in their own countries. Their moſt peeviſh ſarcaſms will certainly mend no body, nor will they themſelves be a bit the better for their want of temper. A judicious man travels in order to profit himſelf by obſerving the varieties that this wide world affords, and not to make himſelf uneaſy becauſe men are not to be found wiſe according to his model in every part of the globe. The variety of the world, is, on the whole, beautiful; and to a well diſpoſed mind will be pleaſing.

On your reaching the firſt town in Italy, whether it be Turin, Genoa, or any other, endeavour to obtain as many letters of recommendation from the natives as you can, to take along with you as you advance further into the country. The nobility of every place; and, above all, the learned, will be pleaſed to give you ſuch letters; and the people to whom you will be thus

recommended,

recommended, will ſtill direct you to others: ſo that, on your alighting in any town, you will preſently have ſome body to talk to; and they all will be glad (either through vanity or natural benevolence, no matter which) of an opportunity of doing you ſome of thoſe petty offices that render travelling agreeable; ſuch as to procure you a good lodging where the inn is not to your liking; to furniſh you with a faithful ſervant when you want one; to tell you the true price of things that you may not be cheated; and what is better than all, to introduce you into the beſt companies of the place. Indeed you may often find, that the gentlemen and ladies to whom you are recommended, are not always ſuch as you would like. You will find one over-civil, and another over-blunt: one abſurd in one point, and another in two or or three. But people muſt be taken as they are, as perfect characters are pretty uncommon every where: there-

fore

fore make the beſt uſe of each. One will ſhow you the place; one his pictures; one his medals; one the country round; and ſo on. And do not omit, if you make the leaſt ſtay in any town, to enquire who are the friars of moſt repute there, and go to them. To a friar there is no need of any introductor. It is enough you pay them the uſual compliment, that you have heard of his merit, and would not miſs the opportunity of paying your reſpects to his reverence. They all will receive you well; ſhow you their convents, their libraries, their gardens, and whatever curioſities they have. They will inform you very minutely of their rules and manner of living, which is pretty ſingular in each order, and deſerving notice. Moſt of them are quite open with ſtrangers; ſo that you will eaſily collect by their diſcourſe what is their ſanctity or their hypocriſy, what their knowledge or their ignorance, what their pleaſures or their pains.

I have

I have brought many an Engliſhman acquainted with many a friar, and both parties were always pleaſed. Nor judge of them by the faces they put on at the altar or in a proceſſion; or ten to one you will judge wrong. See them in their cells; walk with them; eat and drink with thoſe who are permitted by their inſtitutions to eat and drink with ſtrangers; and you will thus come to the knowledge of as ſingular a ſet of men as ever attracted philoſophical curioſity. A traveller ought to ſhun nothing, to ſlight nothing. If he is in any danger from general intercourſe, he is not fit to travel.

Some travel-writers will tell you, that bread and wine are bad throughout Italy, particularly the wine. Do not believe them. The poor in ſeveral parts of Italy often eat bread that is but indifferent; but people in eaſy circumſtances eat good bread every where. At the very worſt, even in the pooreſt villages you will find

bakers

bakers who will make bread for you after your fancy at a ſhort warning for the ſmalleſt addition to the common price. And as to the wine, you will find ſome very good in many parts of Italy, if you are not abſolutely reſolved to think no wine good but claret and burgundy. And ſtill, if you cannot conquer a long habit, you will find burgundy and champaigne in all our great towns; and it is but taking half a dozen bottles in your poſt-chaiſe when you are to go from one great town to another, and cannot perform the journey but in two or three days. And ſo when you are afraid of not finding good victuals in the poor places where you muſt neceſſarily ſtop, a ham, a ſauſage, and ſome chickens, made ready for the pot or the ſpit, and ſome other little expedients cannot prove very troubleſome.

The beds indeed you will find bad enough in many places; and you muſt have a care never to ſleep but in your own ſheets,

becauſe the inn-keepers, when they are poor, are generally ill-provided, and are even rogues into the bargain, that will ſwear no body has ſlept in the ſheets they offer, though the contrary is very apparent; nor will it be amiſs to have a thin mattreſs of your own, ſtuffed with feathers or Spaniſh wool, to throw over the mattreſſes of the inn: for you are not to think that you travel about England where thouſands are continually going backwards and forwards, and of courſe make it worth the while of many to keep good inns.

At the gates of many towns your baggage will be viſited. Be ready with the keys of the trunks; be civil to the viſiters, and they will be civil to you, and diſpatch you in a moment, eſpecially if your ſervant knows the uſe of a glance and of a ſixpence.

Some young travellers are apt to be rude with the maids at the inns. They had better to make a propoſal in two words,

and

and ſtill better to let it alone; for little good will they get by rudeneſs or propoſals. If the nymph be willing, there may be a danger of one ſort; if unwilling, of another. Our common people are generally fierce when women are concerned. And have likewiſe a care not to be very buſy with our theatrical queens and princeſſes; for they will fleece you, and bring you much acquainted with ſurgeons and apothecaries.

Avoid all altercations with inn-keepers, poſtillions, and other ſuch folks, and never forget yourſelf ſo much as to ſtrike or even threaten them; for moſt of theſe people are very choleric; beſides there is no honour to be got in conquering them. No body is pleaſed with travelling Rodomonts any where; and you cannot imagine how the low people in Italy hate being bullied, eſpecially by ſtrangers. An open countenance, an affable look, a kind enquiry

after their chriſtian names, and the offer of a glaſs of your wine if you are actually at your meal, will do wonders towards obtaining whatever you deſire of them: for the Italians, take my word for it, have in general a quick feeling, are of a yielding diſpoſition, and as generous a ſet of mortals as any in the world. If you do not obſerve ſome rule of this kind, travelling will not be better than a ſcene of wrangling and vexation in moſt countries.

Credit your travel-mongers about the character of the Italians, and your imagination will be diſturbed by the moſt horrible tales. There is ſcarcely one of them, but who has a ſtory to tell of a fellow in a church, who has ſtabbed divers perſons. Yet all Italy over, in towns or in villages, on great roads or narrow paths, you may be aſſured that no body will offend you, if you do not chuſe to be offended: but on the contrary you will meet with abundance

dance of reſpect and kindneſs, if you will but moderately deſerve it.

All this, as you ſee, preſuppoſes in you ſome knowledge of the language; and I take it for granted, that you do not venture down the Alps without ſome Italian in your mouth, as travelling through any country without ſome of its language is very diſagreeable and very vexatious. However, if this is not the caſe, haſten to Florence or to Siena (though Florence is the beſt in this reſpect) and there ſtudy as hard as you can, till you get a ſufficient proviſion of words and phraſes. If you want to be any thing of a critic in Italian, Florence is certainly the beſt place in Italy, both to get a good phraſeology and a good pronunciation, as Florence is in both reſpects to Italy what Athens was to Greece. But if you want only a ſmattering for temporary convenience, I have no objection to your going to Rome, as you

you are directed by an Italian * rhyme no leſs common than ridiculous. The Roman pronunciation is much more eaſily acquired than the Florentine, becauſe at Rome the vowels are pronounced broader and with leſs briſkneſs than at Florence. Almoſt all Italians that are not Tuſcans (I ſpeak to him who wants to be a critic in Italian) will be ready to tell you that the Tuſcan pronunciation, and the Florentine eſpecially, is bad, becauſe it is guttural; and that it is guttural I allow: but why is a guttural pronunciation worſe than one which is not? The Hebrew, the Arabic, and ſeveral more of the moſt eſteemed amongſt the ancient languages, were guttural, and not the worſe for it. The true Spaniſh, that is the Caſtilian, which is generally conſidered as a very harmonious language, and in my private opinion quite as muſical as the Italian, is guttural likewiſe. What objection can

* Lingua Toſcana in bocca Romana.

then

then be made to a language on this account, except that it is a little hard to be got at by thoſe who have not the organs of ſpeech very pliant and obedient? However, ſuch as are not of my mind, may do as the rhyme directs; that is, they may go to Florence or Siena to learn words and phraſes, and then to Rome for a proper pronunciation; and a pretty piece of work this will be.

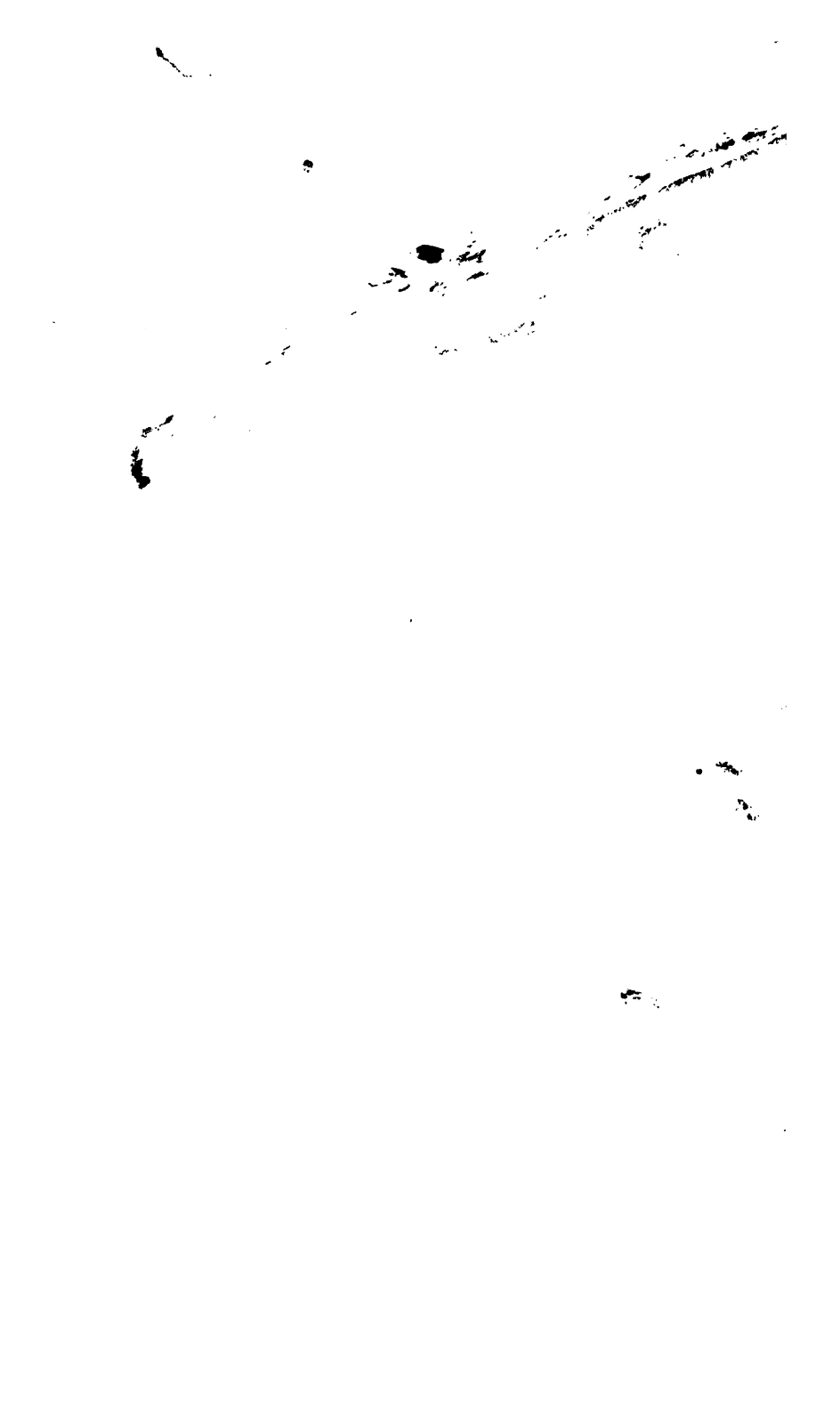
No Engliſh traveller that ever I heard, ever went a ſtep out of thoſe roads, which from the foot of the Alps lead ſtraight to our moſt famed cities. None of them ever will deign to viſit thoſe places whoſe names are not in every body's mouth. They travel to ſee things, and not men. Indeed they cannot help croſſing both the Alps and Apennines in two or three parts; but always do it in ſuch haſte, that their inhabitants are as much known to them as thoſe of the Arimaſpian cliffs. Our mountaineers, ſecluded in a manner from the

reſt of the world, never awake their curioſity. I have heard of a ſmall nation to the north of Vicenza, whoſe language, laws, and manners have nothing in common either with modern Italy or with modern Germany; and they are thought to be the deſcendants of thoſe Cimbri, whom Marius defeated in the neighbourhood of that town. It has been confidently aſſerted, that the preſent king of Spain had been ſome years king of Naples before he heard of a ſmall Greek republic concealed in a mountain of that kingdom. Many amongſt our rumagers of libraries have occaſionally quoted paſſages out of poems and romances written in the old Provençal language, which was once the only polite language of Europe. It is the general opinion that this language is no more ſpoken, as the modern inhabitants of Provence underſtand no more thoſe romances and poems. Yet I have ſome notion that it ſtill exiſts, at leaſt in a good meaſure,

as

as I have met with people at Demont * who could eaſily underſtand thoſe paſſages. It is probable that ſeveral other of the moſt remote parts in our mountains are not wanting in objects as ſingular as theſe, and well deſerving ſome inquiry. Yet they remain perfectly unexplored by thoſe very Britons, who make it a point to ſpend a part of their income and conſecrate a part of their life to the viſitation of diſtant regions and to the knowledge of foreign cuſtoms and manners. Their poor curioſity will ſcarcely extend farther than pictures and ſtatues, or carnival feſtivities and holy-week ceremonies; nor could any of them ever be forced half a mile out of the moſt beaten tracks by my frequent expoſtulations. What a pity

* A fortreſs (as I ſaid in another place) about ten miles diſtant from Cuneo, and higher up in the Piedmonteſe Alps I lived there for ſome months when I was about twenty.

that ſo many young gentlemen of good parts, and never cramped for want of money, ſhould all be ſo perverſe on this particular!

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